Jim Henson's™

THE STORYTELLER™

Giants

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THE STORYT

Cover by
Karl Kerschl

Cover Inset by
Sonny Liew

Spot Illustration by
Dan Mora

Designer
Jillian Crab

Associate Editor
Cameron Chittock

Editor
Sierra Hahn

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TELLER™

Giants

The Peach's Son

Story & Art by
Conor Nolan

Letters by
Warren Montgomery

The Tailor's Daughter

by
Brandon Dayton

Pru and the Fomorian Giants

Story & Art by
Jared Cullum

Letters by
Warren Montgomery

The Fisherman and the Giant

by
Feifei Ruan

TALE ONE COVER

CONOR NOLAN

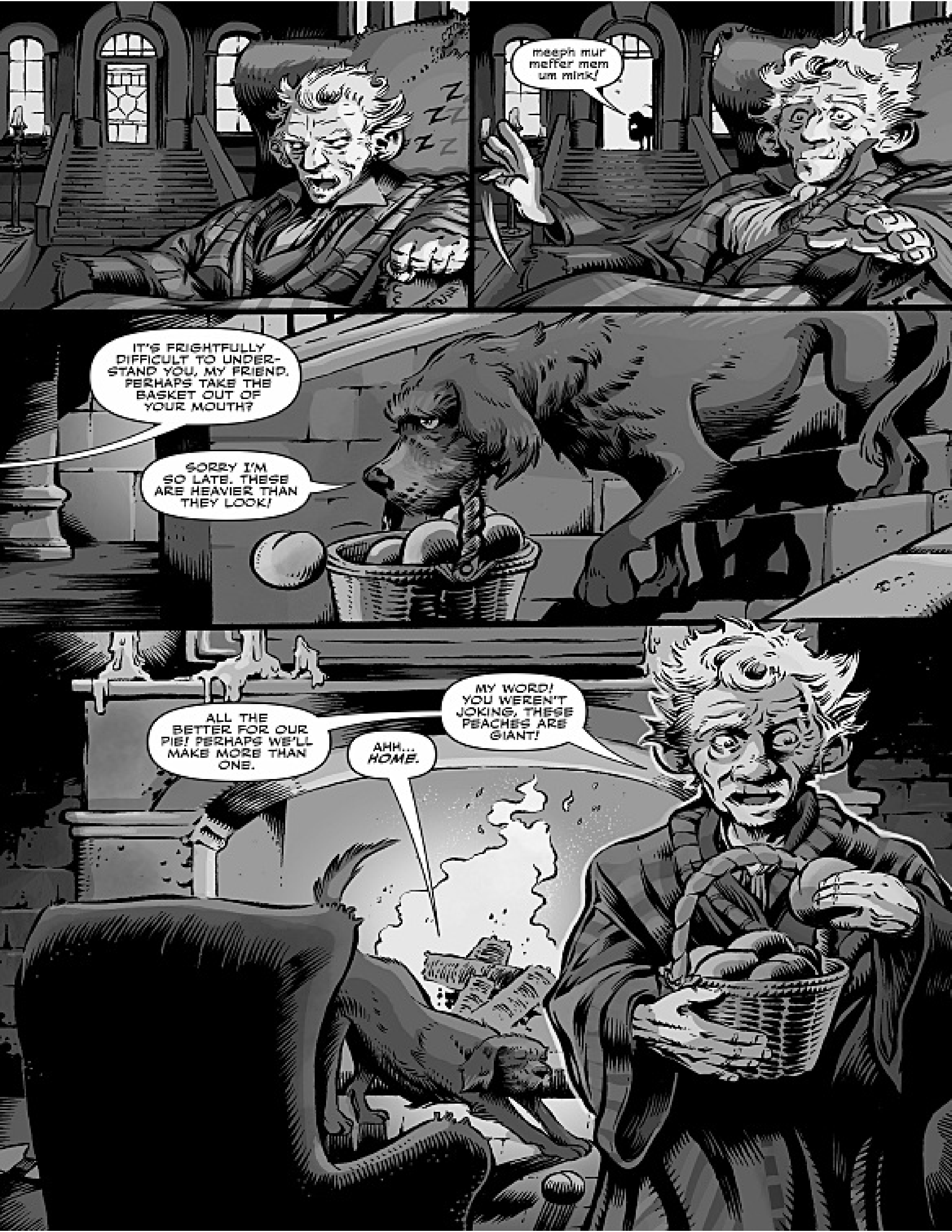
the Peach's Son

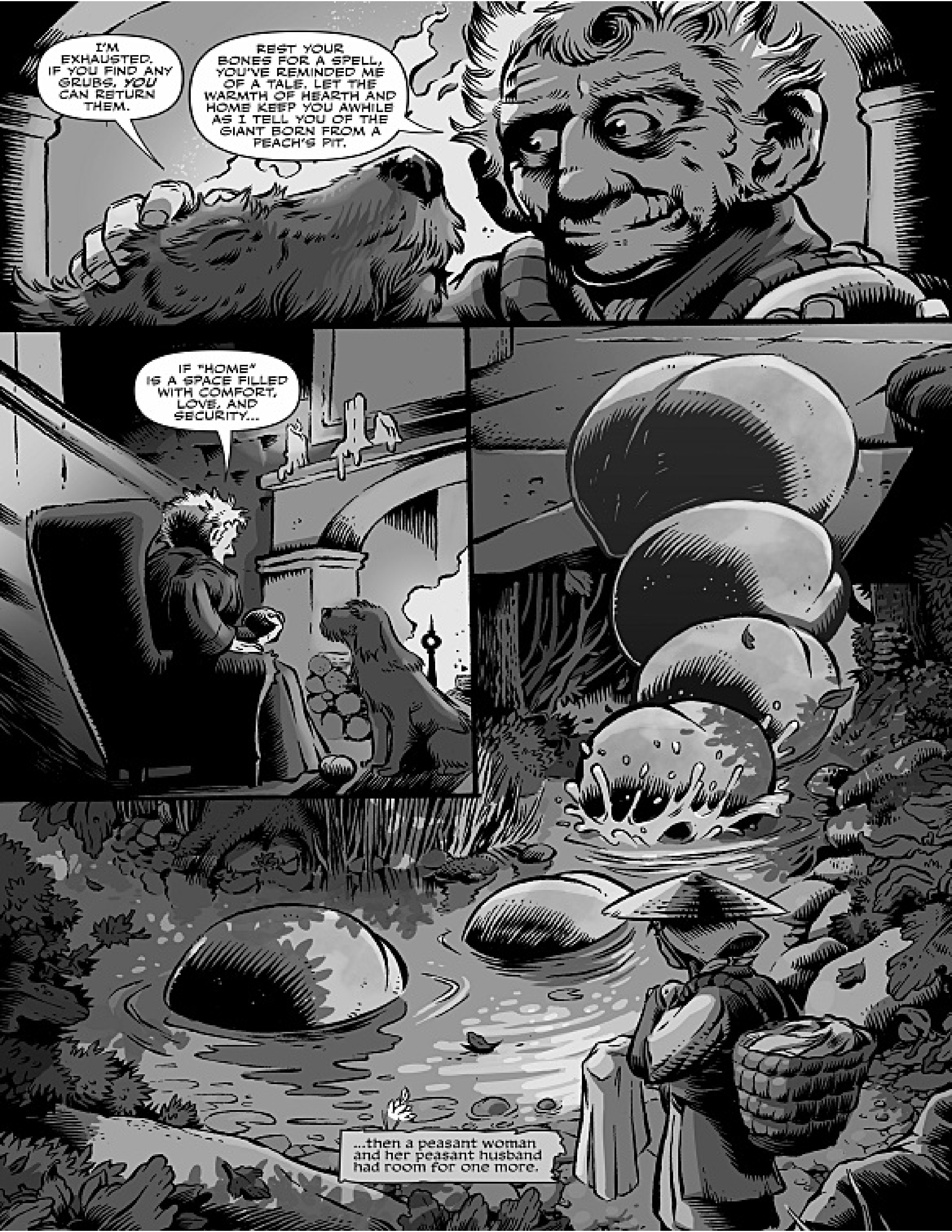
If you look at enough legends regarding giants, you start to see a trend: the majority of the time, they're given a pretty bad rap. Giants are considered malicious, dumb, oversized threats to society. So if a giant shows up in your story, it usually means you have a big problem. Comparatively, legends of giants whom embody a heroic spirit are few and far between.

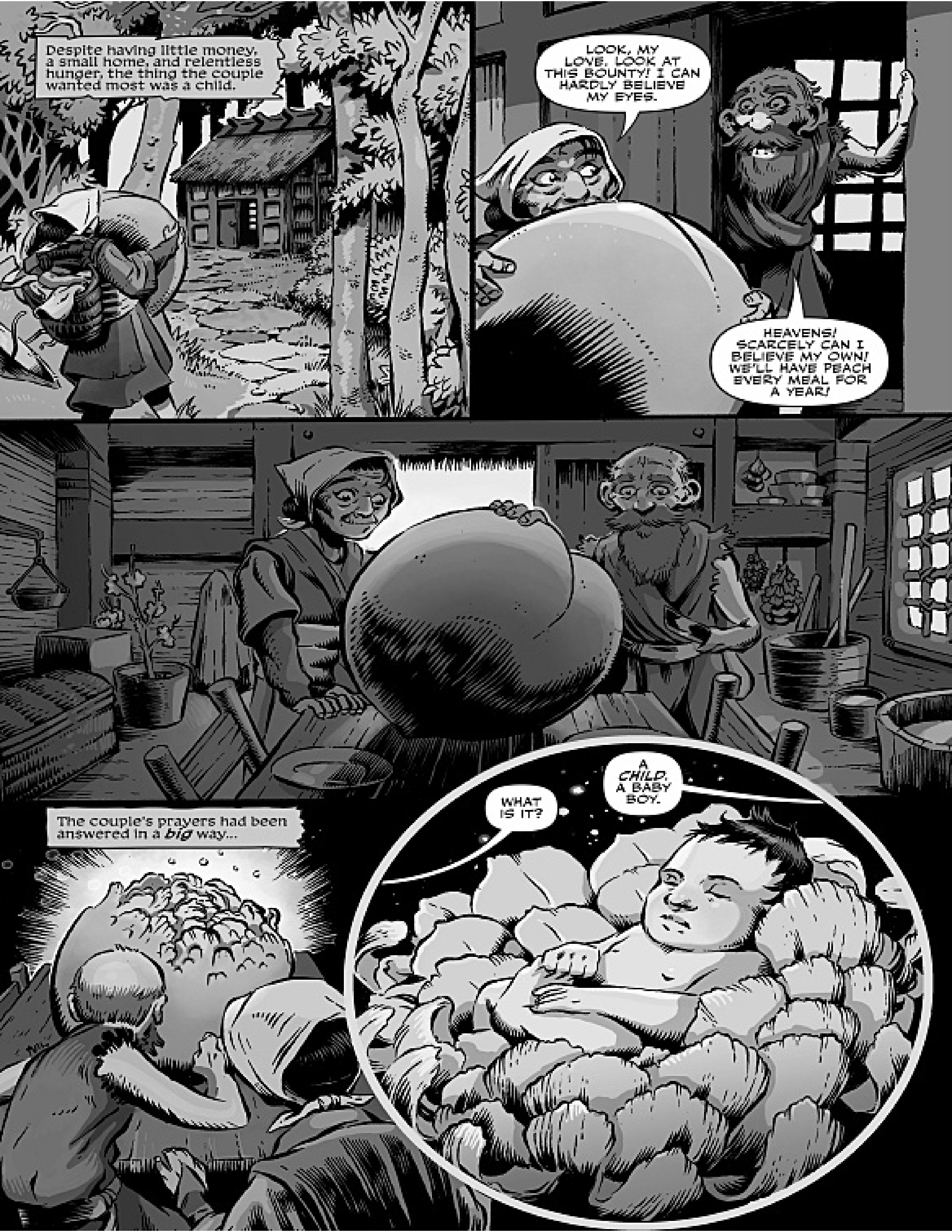
Ultimately, I knew I wanted my giant to err on the side of good, and with a trip to the local library I found my starting point. "Momotarō," or "Peach Boy" originates from Japanese folklore. Though the story has been told with a multitude of variations, the comic stays relatively true to the original narrative. One major addition to the original story is the dilemma faced by the giant and his adopted family after they encounter a community that no longer accepts them. I wanted my giant boy character to relate to all young readers in the respect that they're intelligent, capable of great things, and can overcome any obstacle.

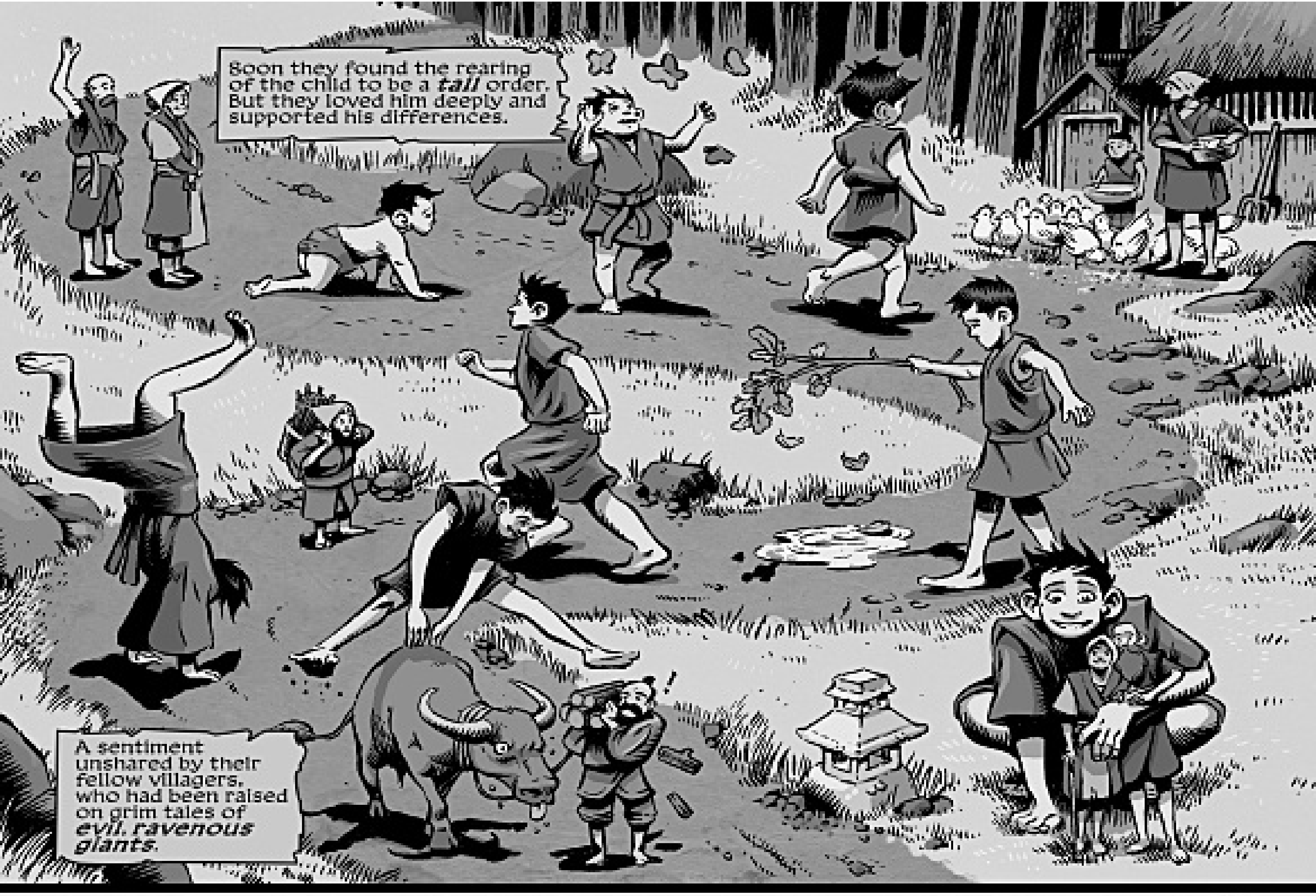
Aesthetically, I wanted the Japanese origins of this story to permeate through the art style as well as embody the playfulness of Jim Henson's storytelling. Influences came from all sides, but conclusively I hope that this rendition pays respect to what all good legends do, which is to cause us to abandon reality and venture into tales that have stood the test of time.

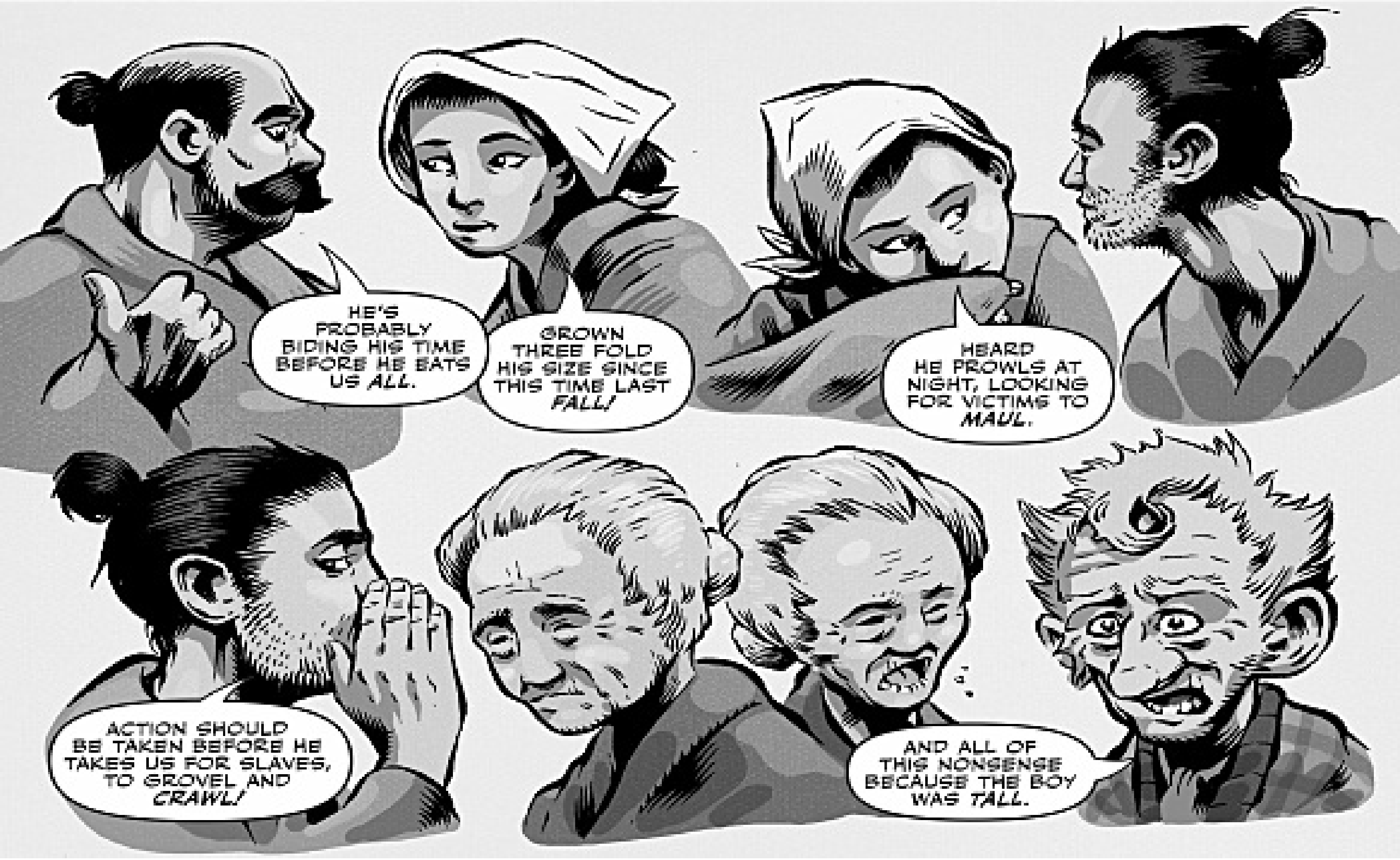
– Conor Nolan

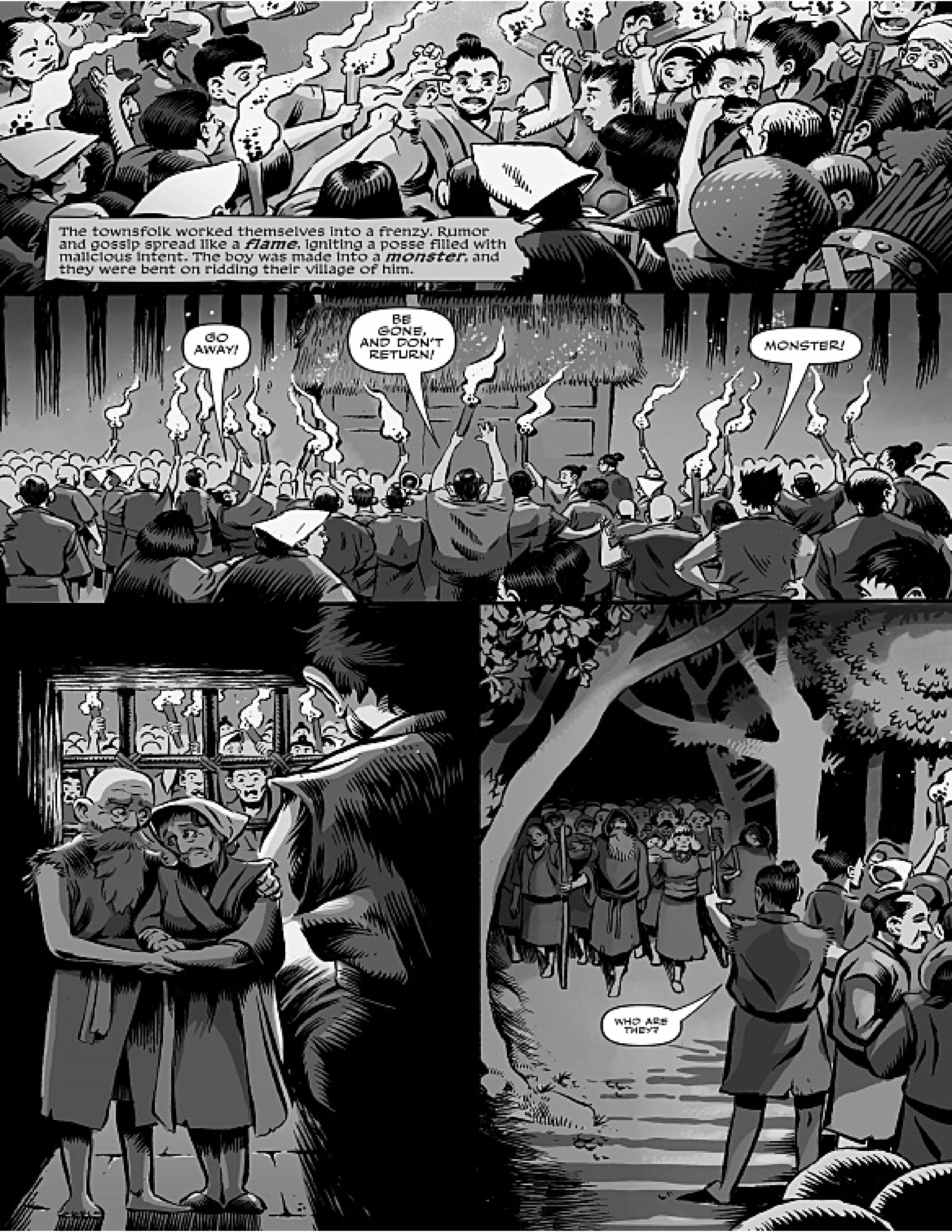

Z Z Z Z
meeph mur meffer mem um mink!
IT'S FRIGHTFULLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND YOU, MY FRIEND. PERHAPS TAKE THE BASKET OUT OF YOUR MOUTH?
SORRY I'M SO LATE. THESE ARE HEAVIER THAN THEY LOOK!
MY WORD! YOU WEREN'T JOKING, THESE PEACHES ARE GIANT!
ALL THE BETTER FOR OUR PIE! PERHAPS WE'LL MAKE MORE THAN ONE.
AHH... *HOME.*

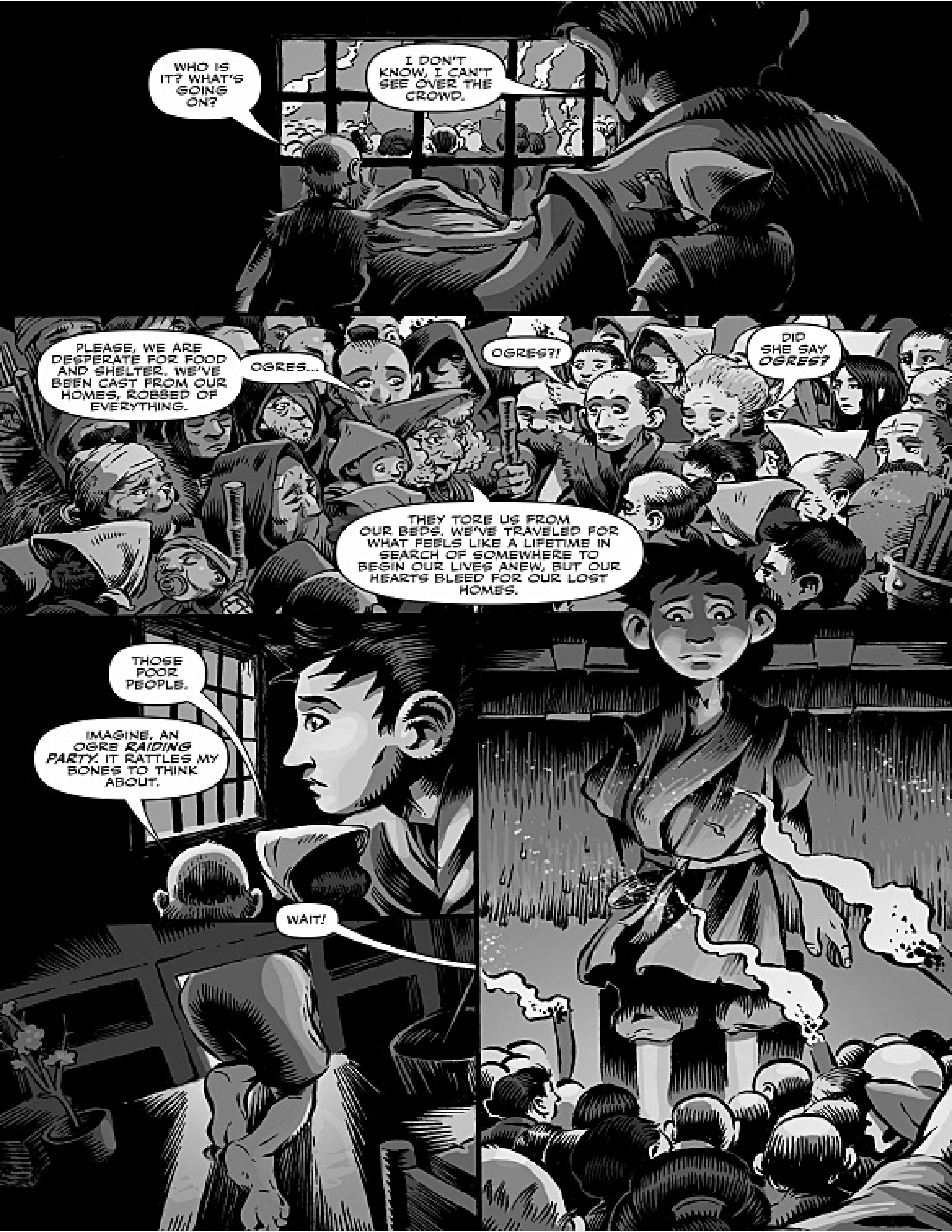

I'M EXHAUSTED. IF YOU FIND ANY GRUBS, *YOU* CAN RETURN THEM.
REST YOUR BONES FOR A SPELL, YOU'VE REMINDED ME OF A TALE. LET THE WARMTH OF HEARTH AND HOME KEEP YOU AWHILE AS I TELL YOU OF THE GIANT BORN FROM A PEACH'S PIT.
IF "HOME" IS A SPACE FILLED WITH COMFORT, LOVE, AND SECURITY...
...then a peasant woman and her peasant husband had room for one more.

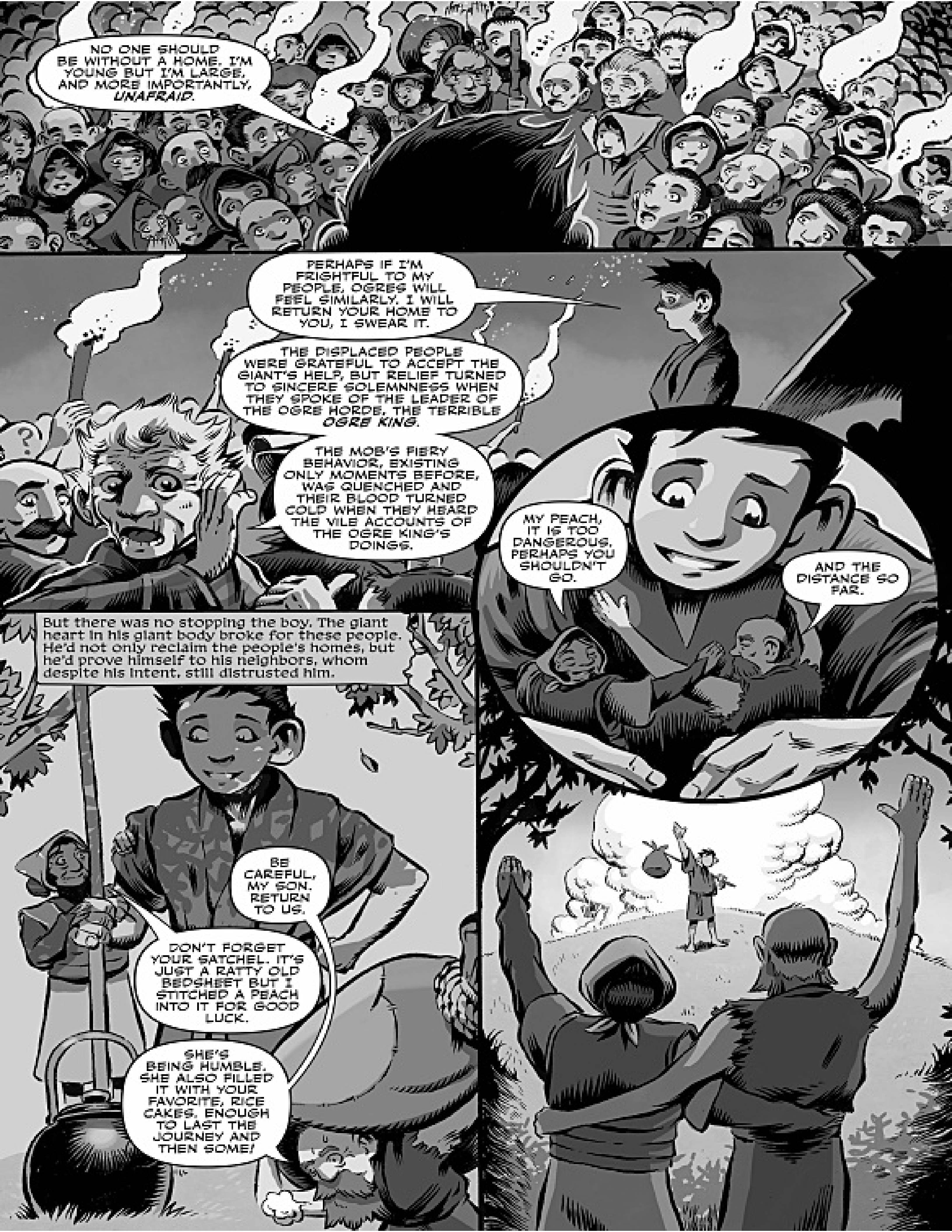

Despite having little money, a small home, and relentless hunger, the thing the couple wanted most was a child.
LOOK, MY LOVE. LOOK AT THIS BOUNTY! I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MY EYES.
HEAVENS! SCARCELY CAN I BELIEVE MY OWN! WE'LL HAVE PEACH EVERY MEAL FOR A YEAR!
The couple's prayers had been answered in a *big* way...
WHAT IS IT?
A *CHILD*. A BABY BOY.

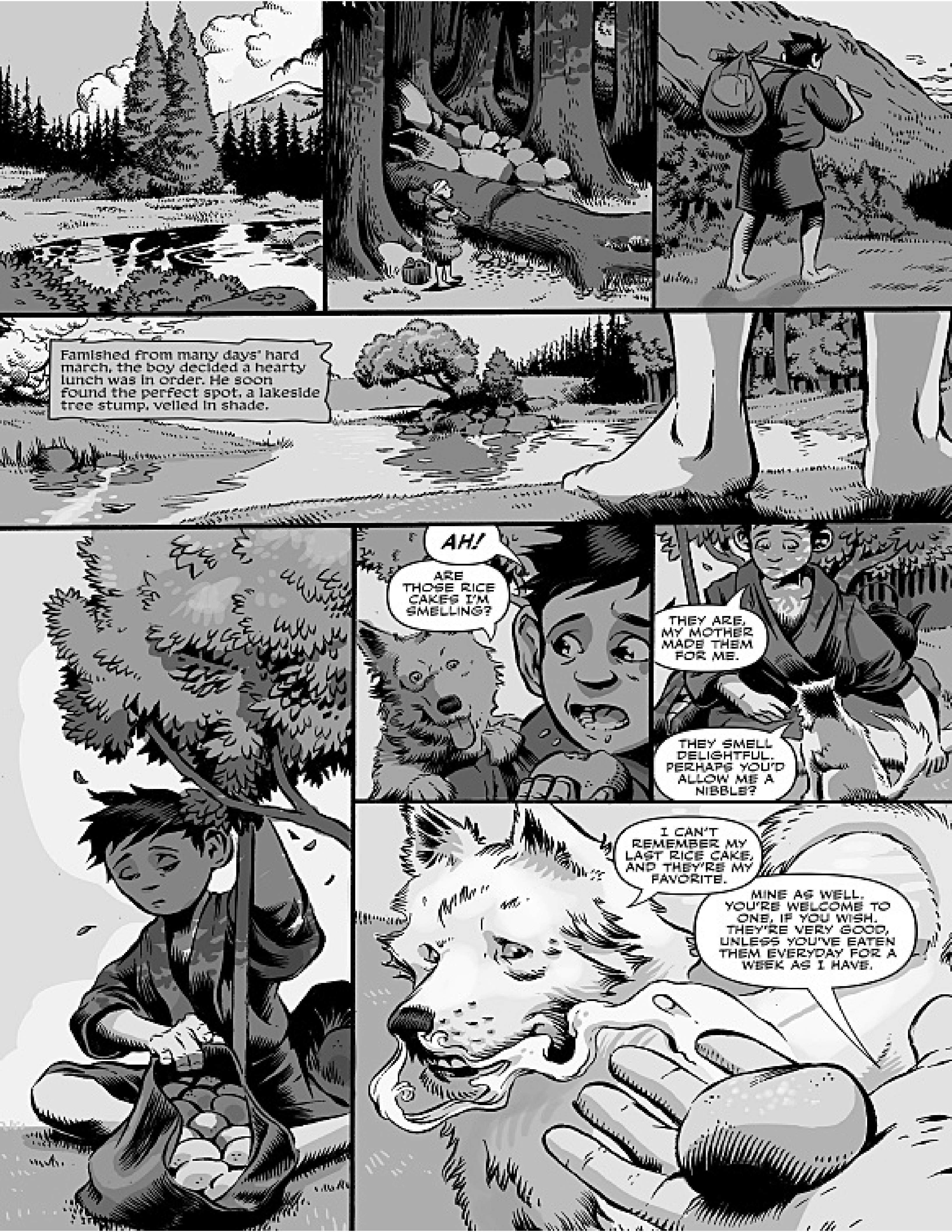

Soon they found the rearing of the child to be a *tall* order. But they loved him deeply and supported his differences.
A sentiment unshared by their fellow villagers, who had been raised on grim tales of ***evil, ravenous giants***.

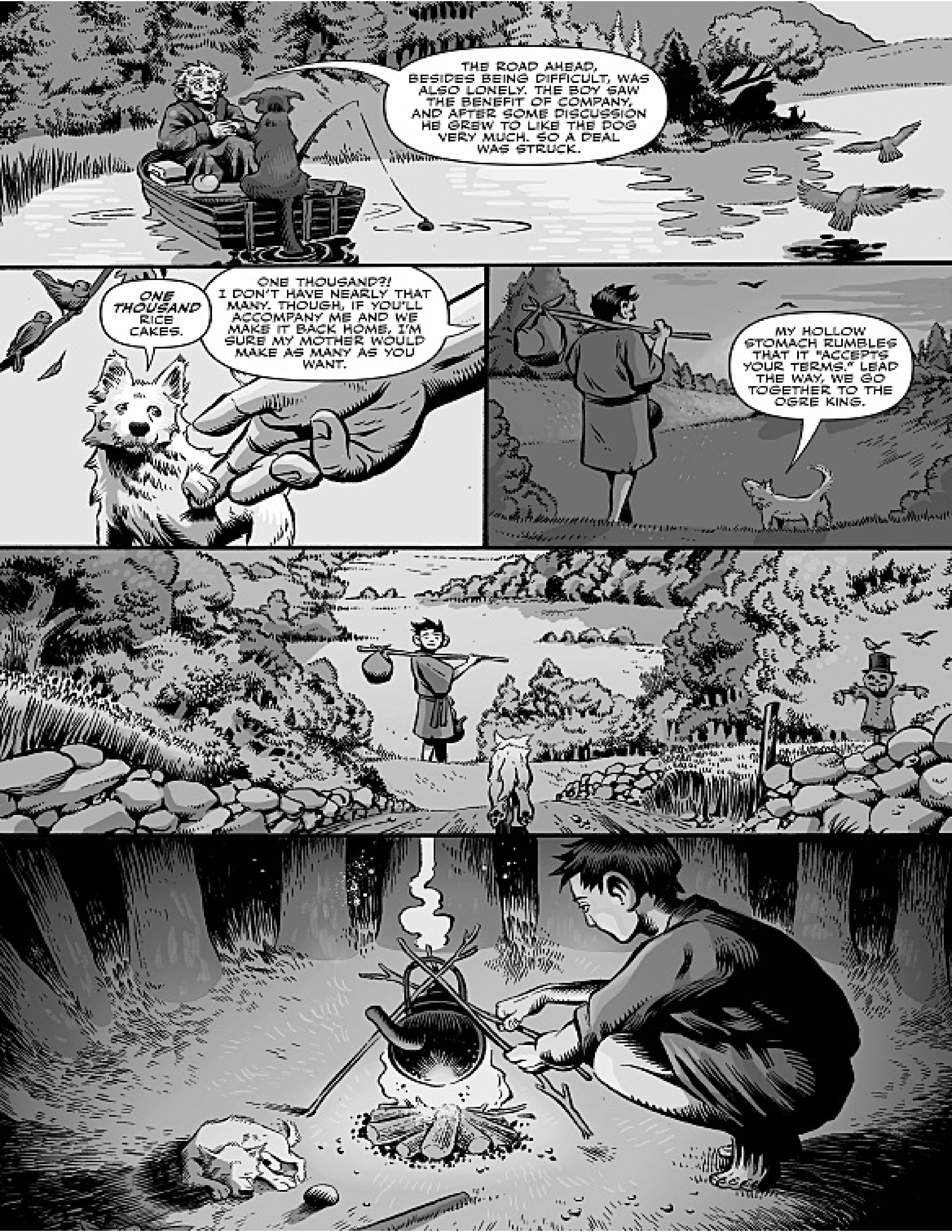

HE'S PROBABLY BIDING HIS TIME BEFORE HE EATS US *ALL*.
GROWN THREE FOLD HIS SIZE SINCE THIS TIME LAST *FALL!*
HEARD HE PROWLS AT NIGHT, LOOKING FOR VICTIMS TO *MAUL*.
ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE HE TAKES US FOR SLAVES, TO GROVEL AND *CRAWL!*
AND ALL OF THIS NONSENSE BECAUSE THE BOY WAS *TALL*.

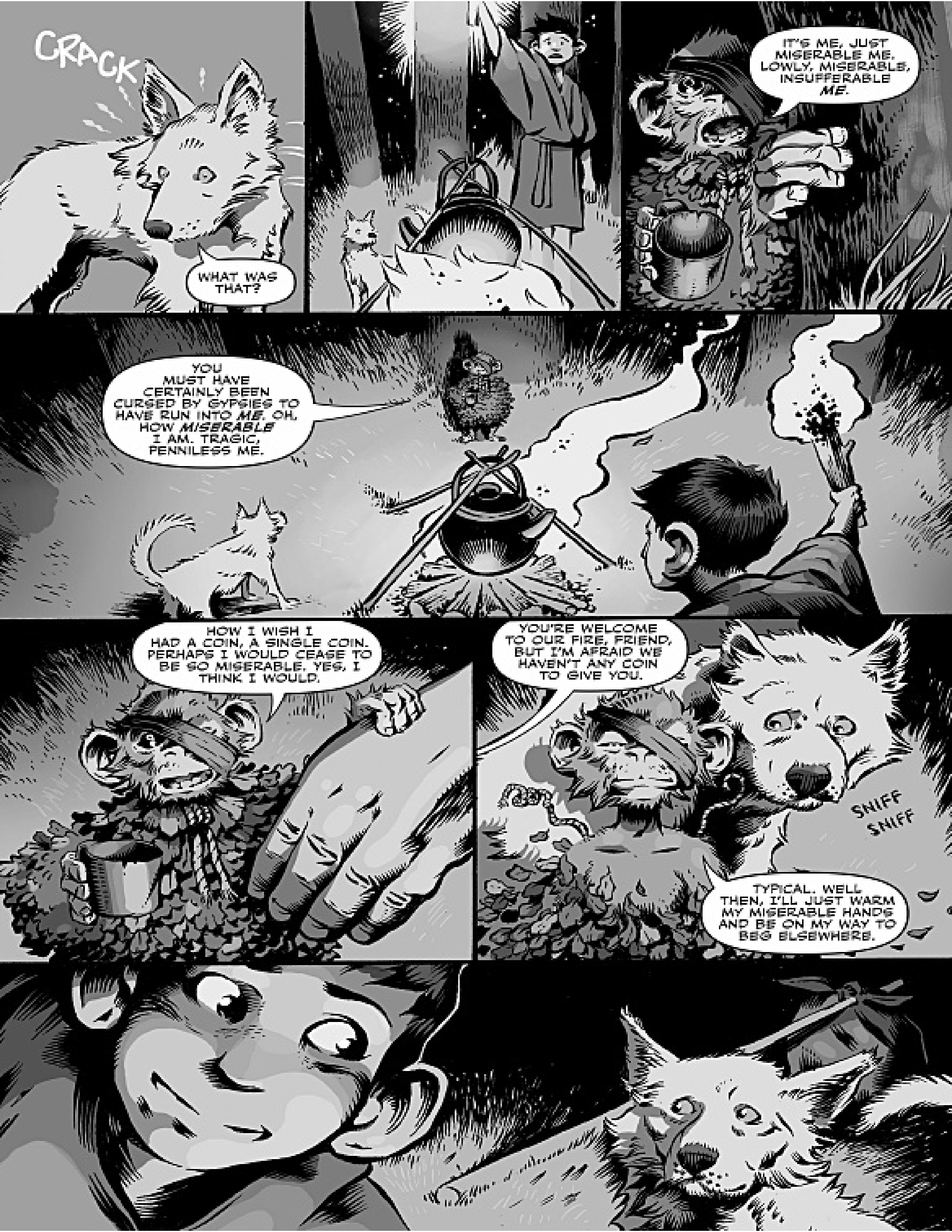

The townsfolk worked themselves into a frenzy. Rumor and gossip spread like a *flame*, igniting a posse filled with malicious intent. The boy was made into a *monster*, and they were bent on ridding their village of him.
GO AWAY!
BE GONE, AND DON'T RETURN!
MONSTER!
WHO ARE THEY?

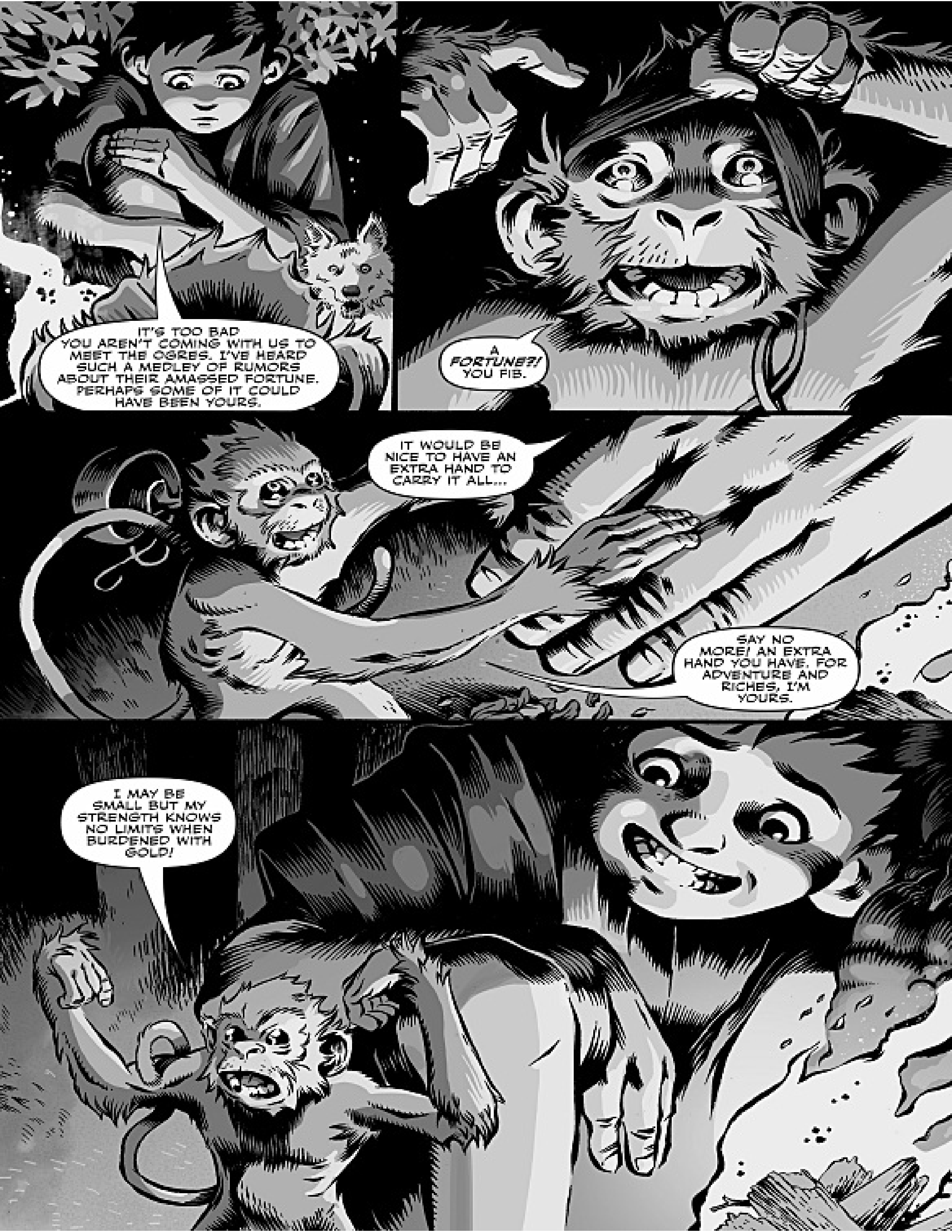

WHO IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I DON'T KNOW, I CAN'T SEE OVER THE CROWD.
PLEASE, WE ARE DESPERATE FOR FOOD AND SHELTER. WE'VE BEEN CAST FROM OUR HOMES, ROBBED OF EVERYTHING.
OGRES...
OGRES?!
DID SHE SAY *OGRES?*
THEY TORE US FROM OUR BEDS. WE'VE TRAVELED FOR WHAT FEELS LIKE A LIFETIME IN SEARCH OF SOMEWHERE TO BEGIN OUR LIVES ANEW, BUT OUR HEARTS BLEED FOR OUR LOST HOMES.
THOSE POOR PEOPLE.
IMAGINE. AN OGRE *RAIDING PARTY*. IT RATTLES MY BONES TO THINK ABOUT.
WAIT!

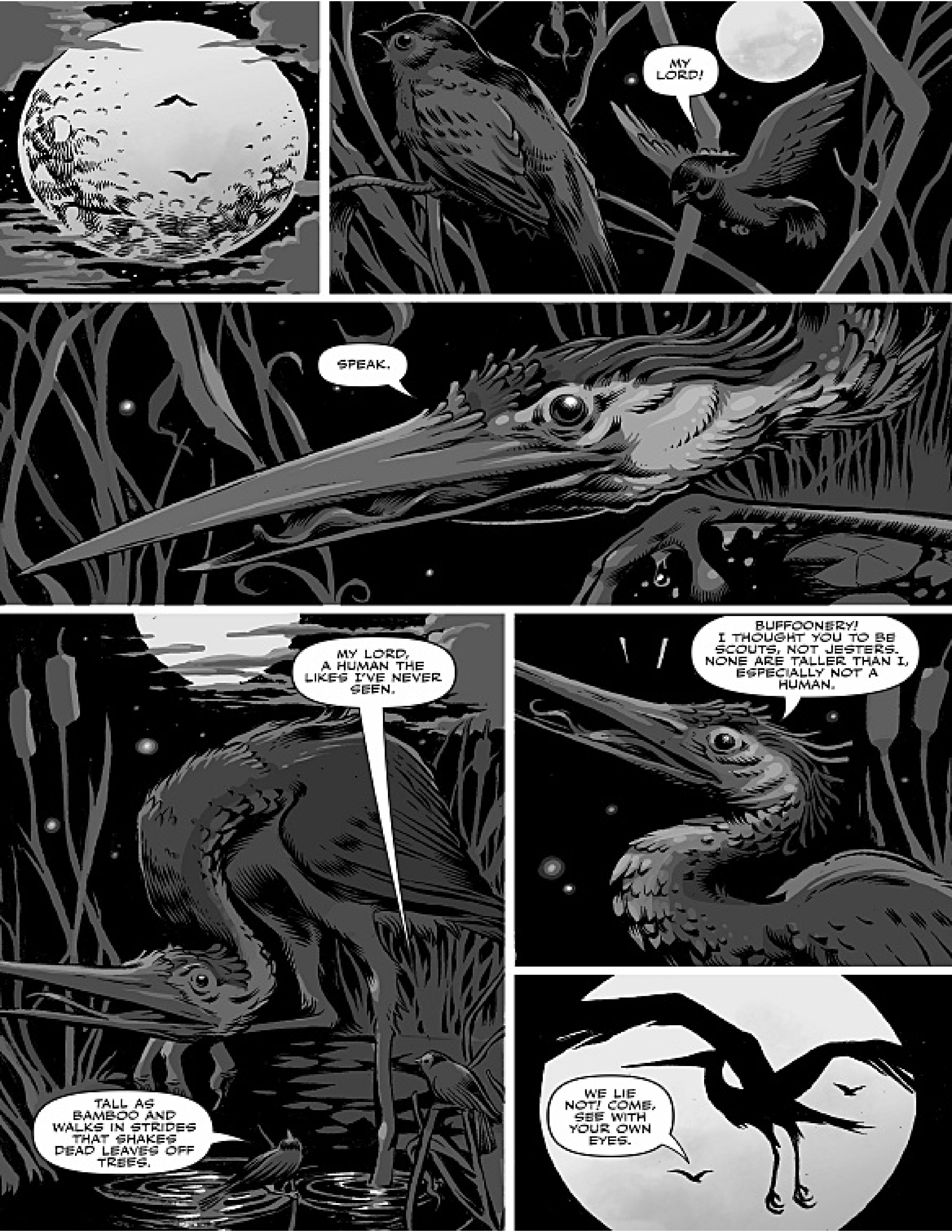

NO ONE SHOULD BE WITHOUT A HOME. I'M YOUNG BUT I'M LARGE, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, *UNAFRAID*.
PERHAPS IF I'M FRIGHTFUL TO MY PEOPLE, OGRES WILL FEEL SIMILARLY. I WILL RETURN YOUR HOME TO YOU, I SWEAR IT.
THE DISPLACED PEOPLE WERE GRATEFUL TO ACCEPT THE GIANT'S HELP, BUT RELIEF TURNED TO SINCERE SOLEMNNESS WHEN THEY SPOKE OF THE LEADER OF THE OGRE HORDE, THE TERRIBLE *OGRE KING*.
?
THE MOB'S FIERY BEHAVIOR, EXISTING ONLY MOMENTS BEFORE, WAS QUENCHED AND THEIR BLOOD TURNED COLD WHEN THEY HEARD THE VILE ACCOUNTS OF THE OGRE KING'S DOINGS.
MY PEACH, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS. PERHAPS YOU SHOULDN'T GO.
AND THE DISTANCE SO FAR.
But there was no stopping the boy. The giant heart in his giant body broke for these people. He'd not only reclaim the people's homes, but he'd prove himself to his neighbors, whom despite his intent, still distrusted him.
BE CAREFUL, MY SON. RETURN TO US.
DON'T FORGET YOUR SATCHEL. IT'S JUST A RATTY OLD BEDSHEET BUT I STITCHED A PEACH INTO IT FOR GOOD LUCK.
SHE'S BEING HUMBLE. SHE ALSO FILLED IT WITH YOUR FAVORITE, RICE CAKES. ENOUGH TO LAST THE JOURNEY AND THEN SOME!

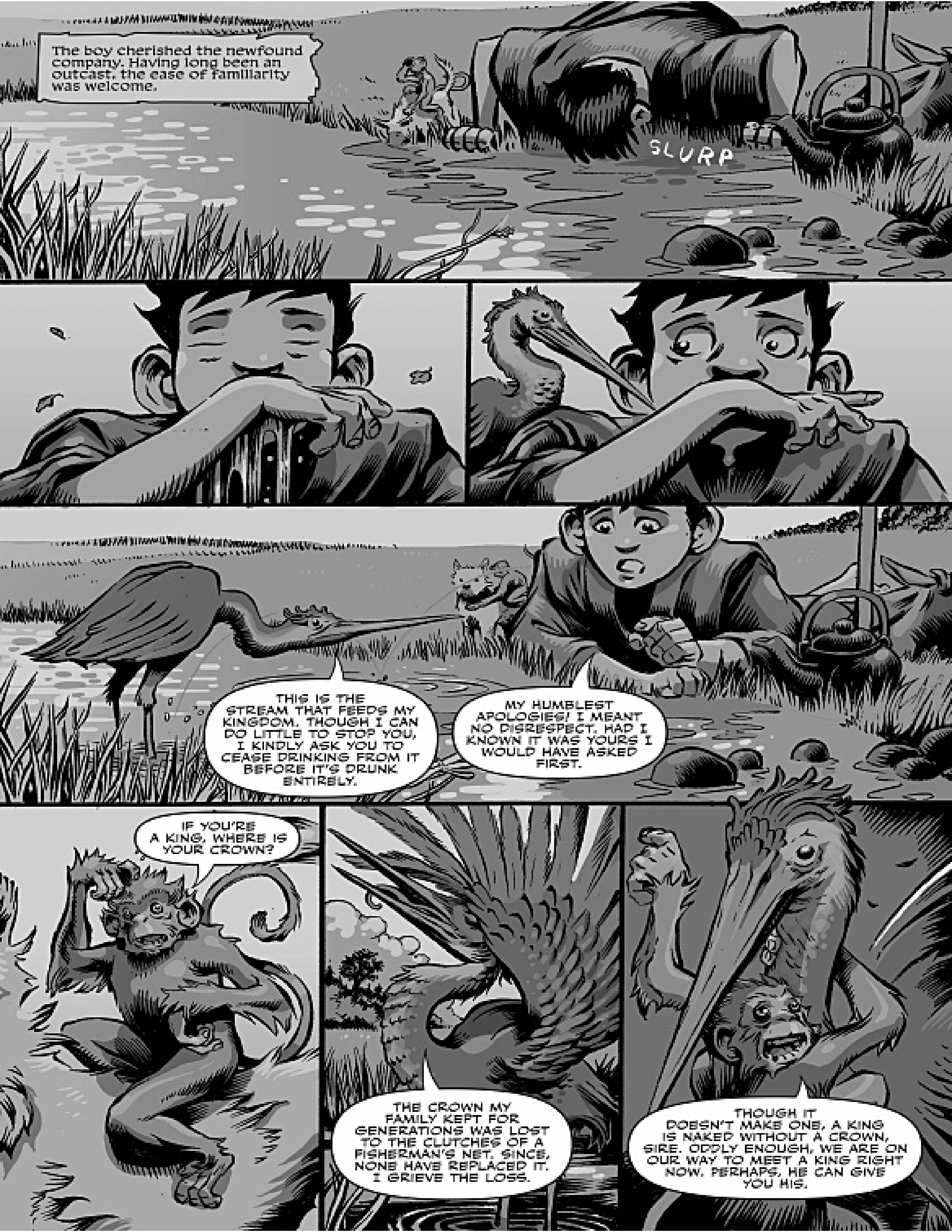

Famished from many days' hard march, the boy decided a hearty lunch was in order. He soon found the perfect spot, a lakeside tree stump, veiled in shade.
AH!
ARE THOSE RICE CAKES I'M SMELLING?
THEY ARE, MY MOTHER MADE THEM FOR ME.
THEY SMELL DELIGHTFUL. PERHAPS YOU'D ALLOW ME A NIBBLE?
I CAN'T REMEMBER MY LAST RICE CAKE, AND THEY'RE MY FAVORITE.
MINE AS WELL. YOU'RE WELCOME TO ONE, IF YOU WISH. THEY'RE VERY GOOD, UNLESS YOU'VE EATEN THEM EVERYDAY FOR A WEEK AS I HAVE.

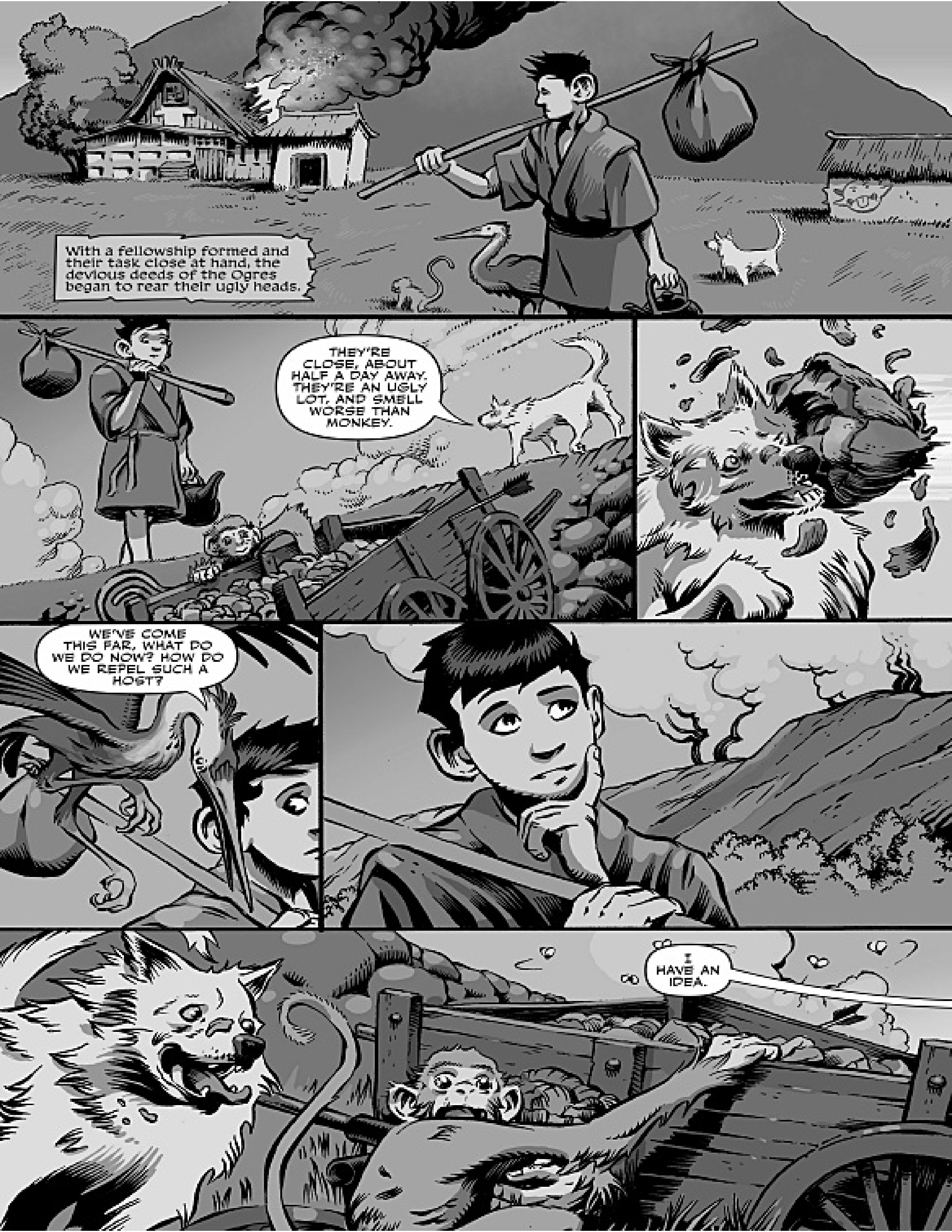

THE ROAD AHEAD, BESIDES BEING DIFFICULT, WAS ALSO LONELY. THE BOY SAW THE BENEFIT OF COMPANY, AND AFTER SOME DISCUSSION HE GREW TO LIKE THE DOG VERY MUCH. SO A DEAL WAS STRUCK.
ONE THOUSAND RICE CAKES.
ONE THOUSAND?! I DON'T HAVE NEARLY THAT MANY. THOUGH, IF YOU'LL ACCOMPANY ME AND WE MAKE IT BACK HOME, I'M SURE MY MOTHER WOULD MAKE AS MANY AS YOU WANT.
MY HOLLOW STOMACH RUMBLES THAT IT "ACCEPTS YOUR TERMS." LEAD THE WAY. WE GO TOGETHER TO THE OGRE KING.

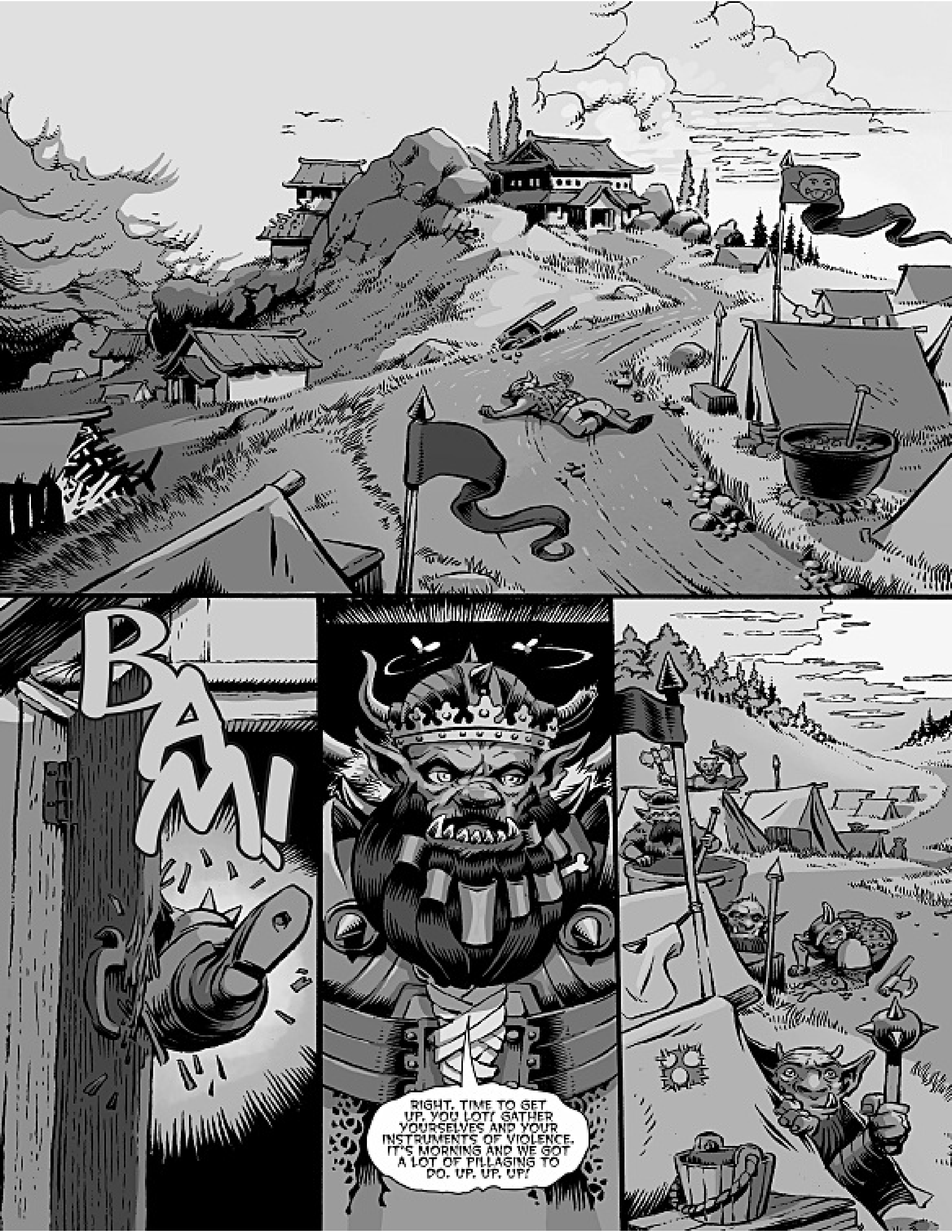

CRACK
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT'S ME, JUST MISERABLE ME. LOWLY, MISERABLE, INSUFFERABLE *ME*.
YOU MUST HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN CURSED BY GYPSIES TO HAVE RUN INTO *ME*. OH, HOW *MISERABLE* I AM. TRAGIC, PENNILESS ME.
HOW I WISH I HAD A COIN, A SINGLE COIN. PERHAPS I WOULD CEASE TO BE SO MISERABLE. YES, I THINK I WOULD.
YOU'RE WELCOME TO OUR FIRE, FRIEND, BUT I'M AFRAID WE HAVEN'T ANY COIN TO GIVE YOU.
SNIFF SNIFF
TYPICAL. WELL THEN, I'LL JUST WARM MY MISERABLE HANDS AND BE ON MY WAY TO BEG ELSEWHERE.

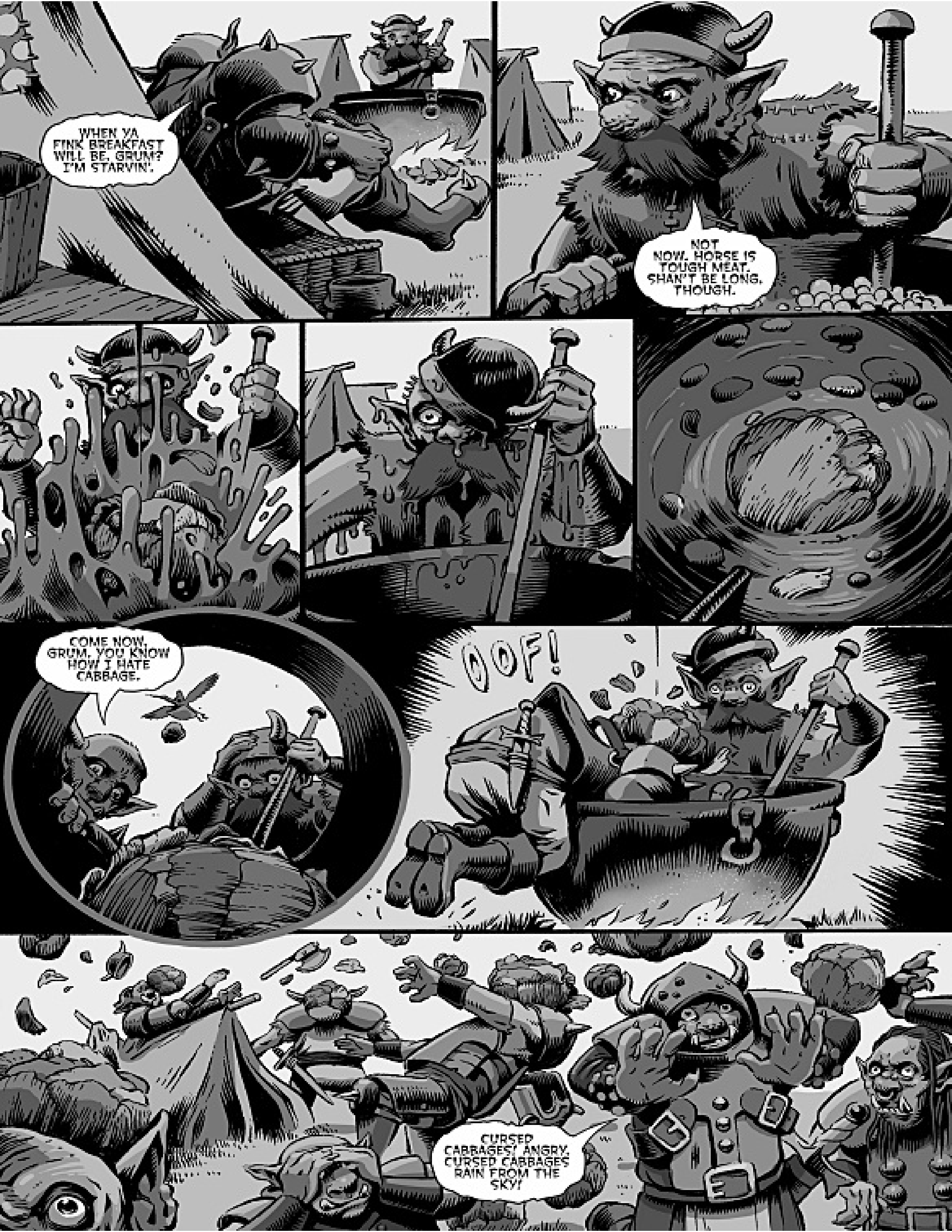

IT'S TOO BAD YOU AREN'T COMING WITH US TO MEET THE OGRES. I'VE HEARD SUCH A MEDLEY OF RUMORS ABOUT THEIR AMASSED FORTUNE. PERHAPS SOME OF IT COULD HAVE BEEN YOURS.
A *FORTUNE?!* YOU FIB.
IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE AN EXTRA HAND TO CARRY IT ALL...
SAY NO MORE! AN EXTRA HAND YOU HAVE. FOR ADVENTURE AND RICHES, I'M YOURS.
I MAY BE SMALL BUT MY STRENGTH KNOWS NO LIMITS WHEN BURDENED WITH GOLD!

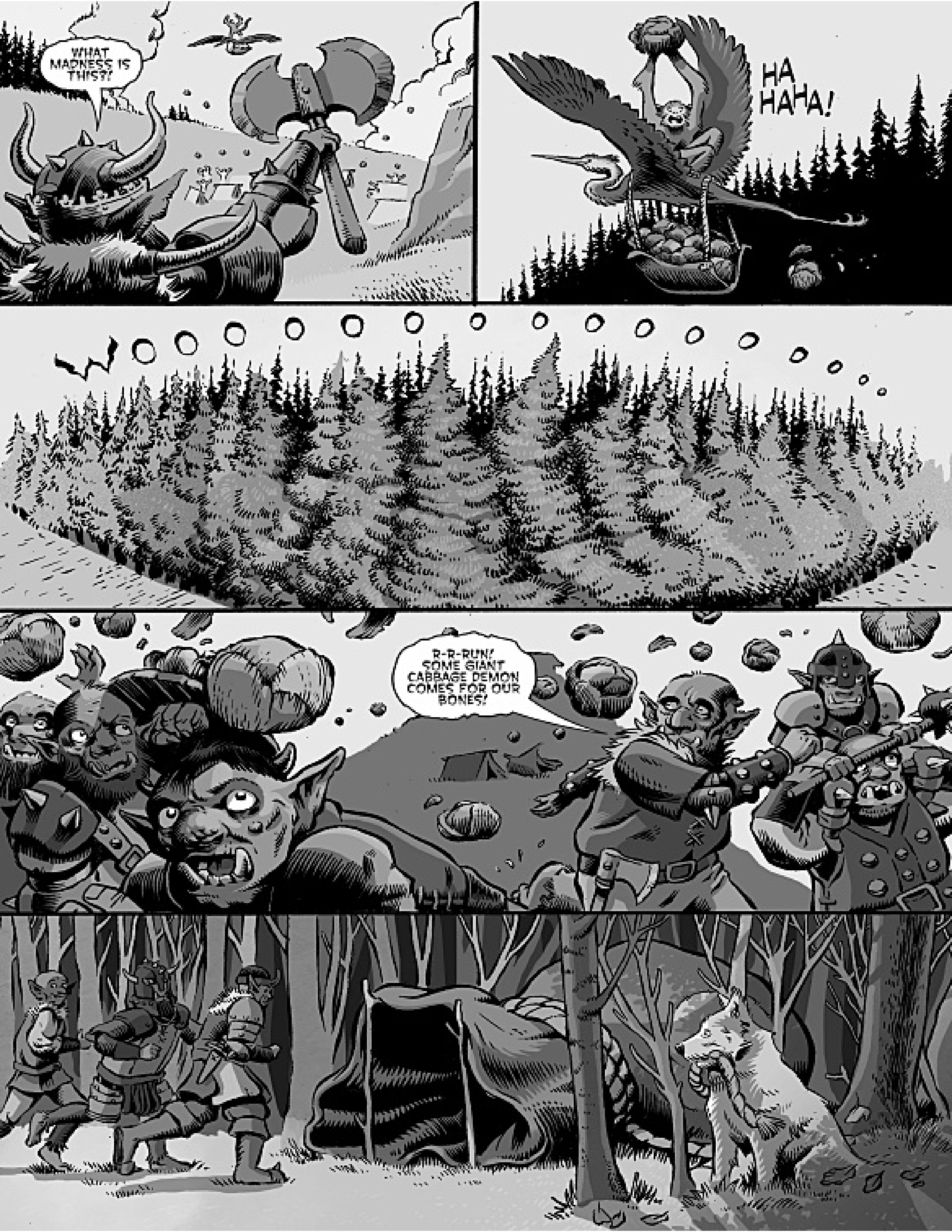

MY LORD!
SPEAK.
MY LORD, A HUMAN THE LIKES I'VE NEVER SEEN.
TALL AS BAMBOO AND WALKS IN STRIDES THAT SHAKES DEAD LEAVES OFF TREES.
BUFFOONERY! I THOUGHT YOU TO BE SCOUTS, NOT JESTERS. NONE ARE TALLER THAN I, ESPECIALLY NOT A HUMAN.
WE LIE NOT! COME, SEE WITH YOUR OWN EYES.

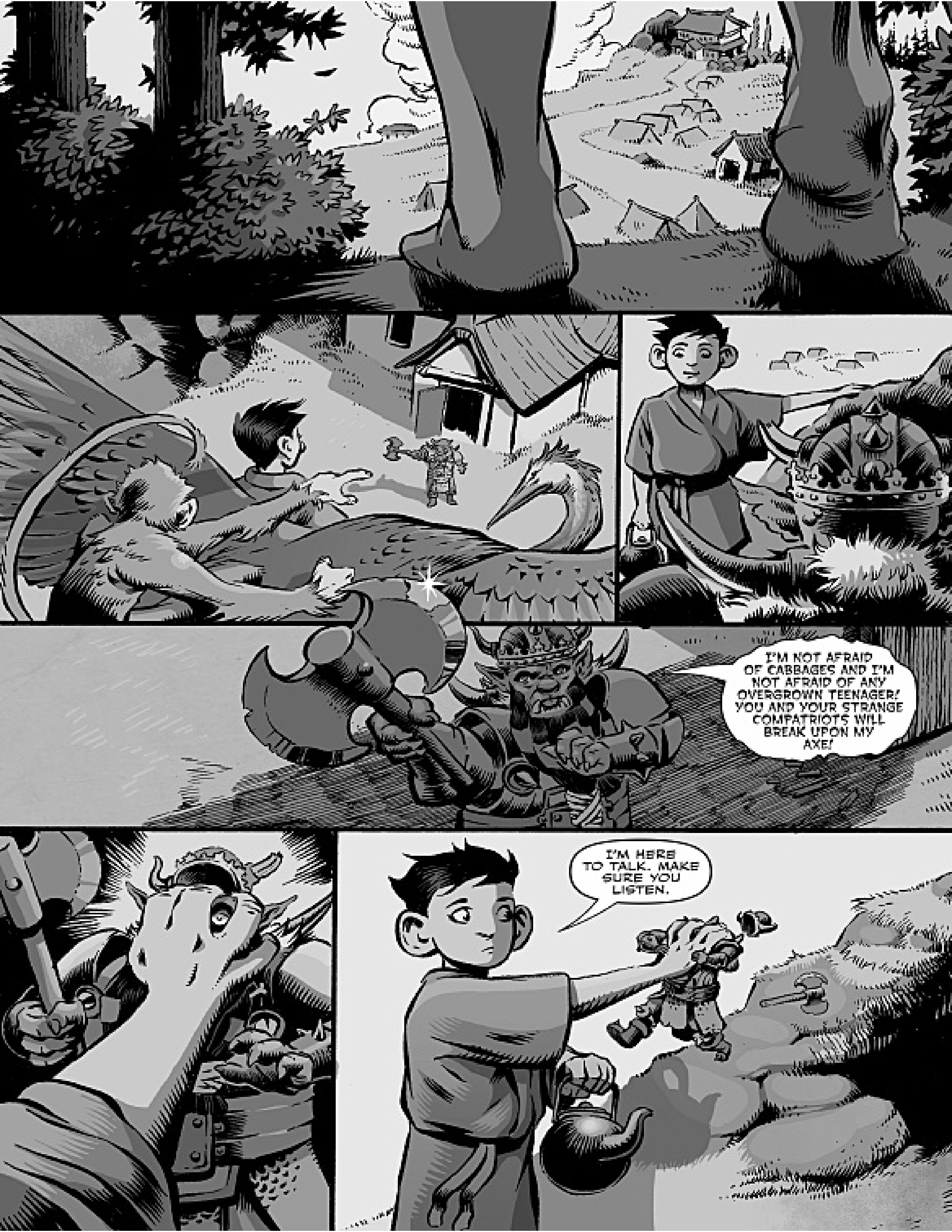

The boy cherished the newfound company. Having long been an outcast, the ease of familiarity was welcome.
SLURP
THIS IS THE STREAM THAT FEEDS MY KINGDOM. THOUGH I CAN DO LITTLE TO STOP YOU, I KINDLY ASK YOU TO CEASE DRINKING FROM IT BEFORE IT'S DRUNK ENTIRELY.
MY HUMBLEST APOLOGIES! I MEANT NO DISRESPECT. HAD I KNOWN IT WAS YOURS I WOULD HAVE ASKED FIRST.
IF YOU'RE A KING, WHERE IS YOUR CROWN?
THE CROWN MY FAMILY KEPT FOR GENERATIONS WAS LOST TO THE CLUTCHES OF A FISHERMAN'S NET. SINCE, NONE HAVE REPLACED IT. I GRIEVE THE LOSS.
THOUGH IT DOESN'T MAKE ONE, A KING IS NAKED WITHOUT A CROWN, SIRE. ODDLY ENOUGH, WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO MEET A KING RIGHT NOW. PERHAPS, HE CAN GIVE YOU HIS.

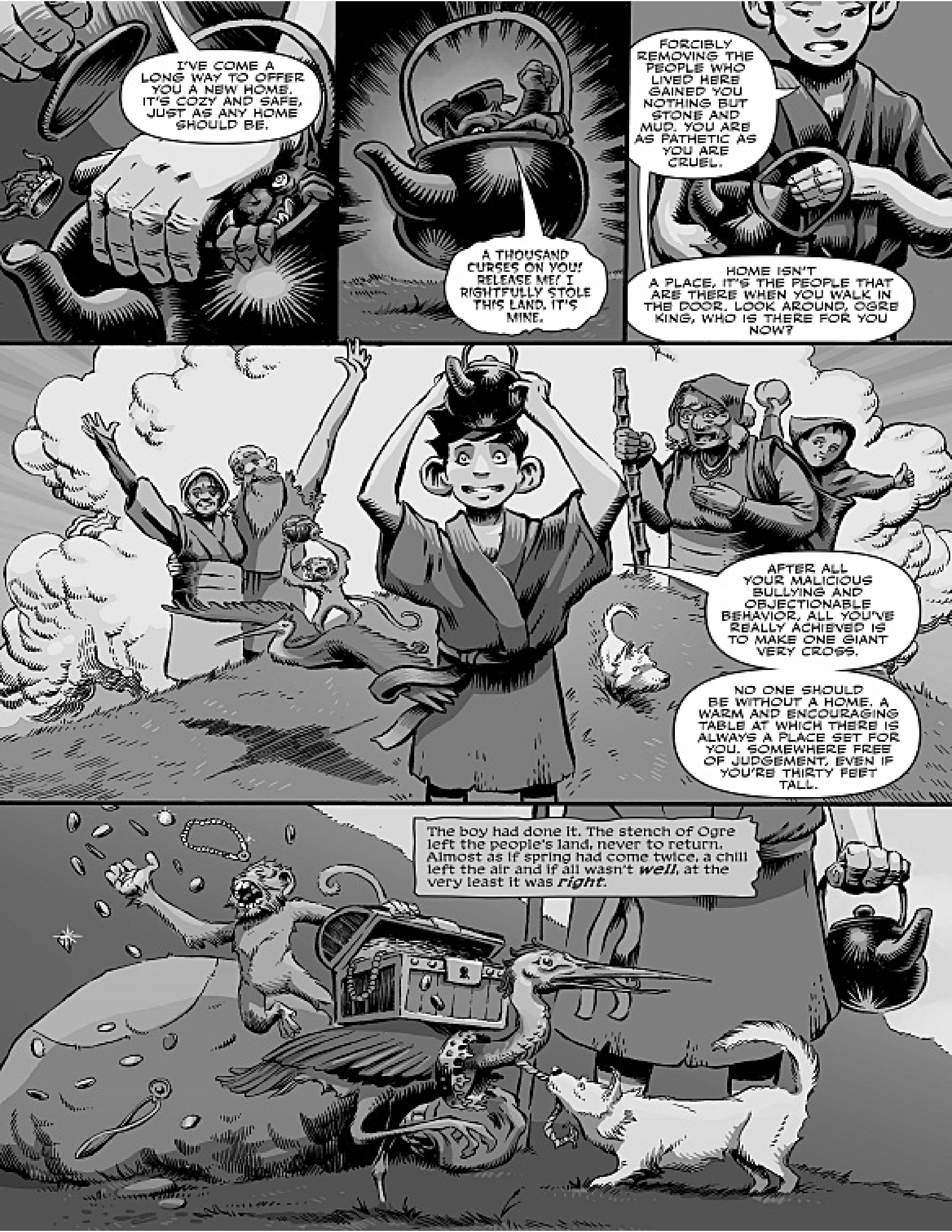

With a fellowship formed and their task close at hand, the devious deeds of the Ogres began to rear their ugly heads.
THEY'RE CLOSE, ABOUT HALF A DAY AWAY. THEY'RE AN UGLY LOT, AND SMELL WORSE THAN MONKEY.
WE'VE COME THIS FAR, WHAT DO WE DO NOW? HOW DO WE REPEL SUCH A HOST?
I HAVE AN IDEA.

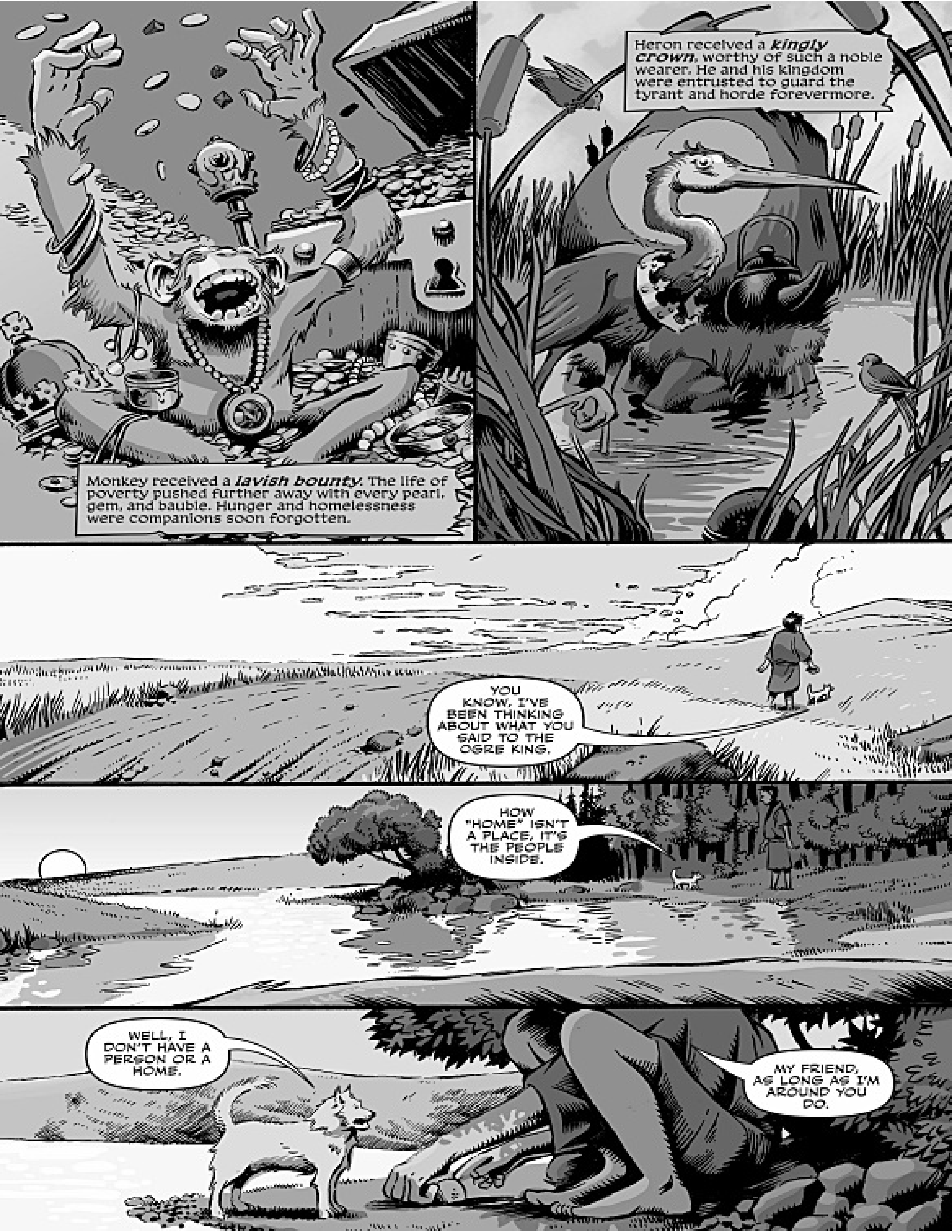

BAM!
RIGHT. TIME TO GET UP, YOU LOT! GATHER YOURSELVES AND YOUR INSTRUMENTS OF VIOLENCE. IT'S MORNING AND WE GOT A LOT OF PILLAGING TO DO. UP, UP, UP!

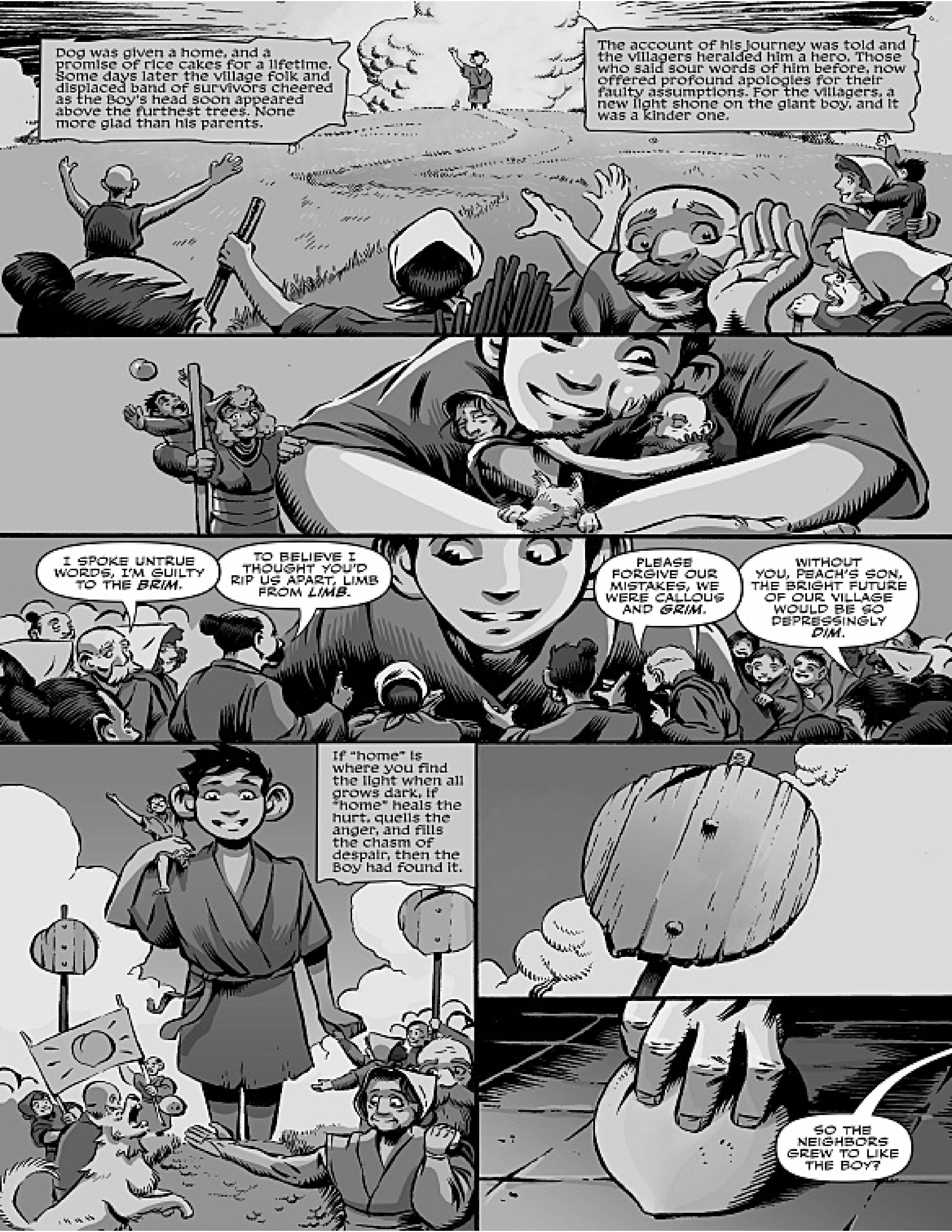

WHEN YA FINK BREAKFAST WILL BE, GRUM? I'M STARVIN'.
NOT NOW. HORSE IS TOUGH MEAT. SHAN'T BE LONG, THOUGH.
COME NOW, GRUM, YOU KNOW HOW I HATE CABBAGE.
OOF!
CURSED CABBAGES! ANGRY, CURSED CABBAGES RAIN FROM THE SKY!

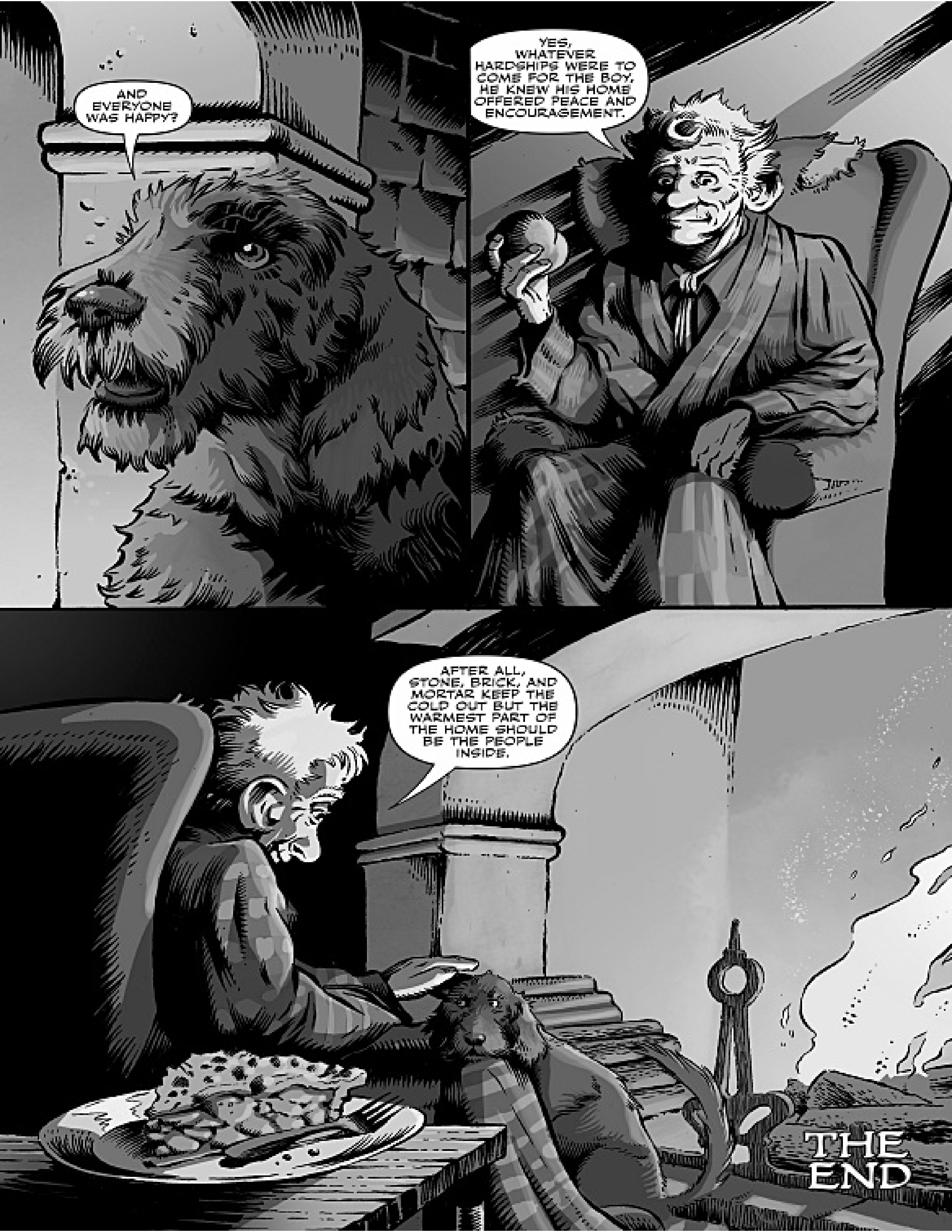

WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?!
HA HAHA!
R-R-RUN! SOME GIANT CABBAGE DEMON COMES FOR OUR BONES!


I'M NOT AFRAID OF CABBAGES AND I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANY OVERGROWN TEENAGER! YOU AND YOUR STRANGE COMPATRIOTS WILL BREAK UPON MY AXE!
I'M HERE TO TALK. MAKE SURE YOU LISTEN.


I'VE COME A LONG WAY TO OFFER YOU A NEW HOME. IT'S COZY AND SAFE, JUST AS ANY HOME SHOULD BE.
A THOUSAND CURSES ON YOU! RELEASE ME! I RIGHTFULLY STOLE THIS LAND. IT'S MINE.
FORCIBLY REMOVING THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED HERE GAINED YOU NOTHING BUT STONE AND MUD. YOU ARE AS PATHETIC AS YOU ARE CRUEL.
HOME ISN'T A PLACE, IT'S THE PEOPLE THAT ARE THERE WHEN YOU WALK IN THE DOOR. LOOK AROUND, OGRE KING, WHO IS THERE FOR YOU NOW?
AFTER ALL YOUR MALICIOUS BULLYING AND OBJECTIONABLE BEHAVIOR, ALL YOU'VE REALLY ACHIEVED IS TO MAKE ONE GIANT VERY CROSS.
NO ONE SHOULD BE WITHOUT A HOME. A WARM AND ENCOURAGING TABLE AT WHICH THERE IS ALWAYS A PLACE SET FOR YOU. SOMEWHERE FREE OF JUDGEMENT, EVEN IF YOU'RE THIRTY FEET TALL.
The boy had done it. The stench of Ogre left the people's land, never to return. Almost as if spring had come twice, a chill left the air and if all wasn't *well*, at the very least it was *right*.


Monkey received a *lavish bounty*. The life of poverty pushed further away with every pearl, gem, and bauble. Hunger and homelessness were companions soon forgotten.
Heron received a *kingly crown*, worthy of such a noble wearer. He and his kingdom were entrusted to guard the tyrant and horde forevermore.
YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID TO THE OGRE KING.
HOW "HOME" ISN'T A PLACE, IT'S THE PEOPLE INSIDE.
WELL, I DON'T HAVE A PERSON OR A HOME.
MY FRIEND, AS LONG AS I'M AROUND YOU DO.


Dog was given a home, and a promise of rice cakes for a lifetime. Some days later the village folk and displaced band of survivors cheered as the Boy's head soon appeared above the furthest trees. None more glad than his parents.
The account of his journey was told and the villagers heralded him a hero. Those who said sour words of him before, now offered profound apologies for their faulty assumptions. For the villagers, a new light shone on the giant boy, and it was a kinder one.
I SPOKE UNTRUE WORDS, I'M GUILTY TO THE *BRIM*.
TO BELIEVE I THOUGHT YOU'D RIP US APART, LIMB FROM *LIMB*.
PLEASE FORGIVE OUR MISTAKES, WE WERE CALLOUS AND *GRIM*.
WITHOUT YOU, PEACH'S SON, THE BRIGHT FUTURE OF OUR VILLAGE WOULD BE SO DEPRESSINGLY *DIM*.
If "home" is where you find the light when all grows dark, if "home" heals the hurt, quells the anger, and fills the chasm of despair, then the Boy had found it.
SO THE NEIGHBORS GREW TO LIKE THE BOY?


AND EVERYONE WAS HAPPY?
YES, WHATEVER HARDSHIPS WERE TO COME FOR THE BOY, HE KNEW HIS HOME OFFERED PEACE AND ENCOURAGEMENT.
AFTER ALL, STONE, BRICK, AND MORTAR KEEP THE COLD OUT BUT THE WARMEST PART OF THE HOME SHOULD BE THE PEOPLE INSIDE.
THE END

TALE TWO COVER

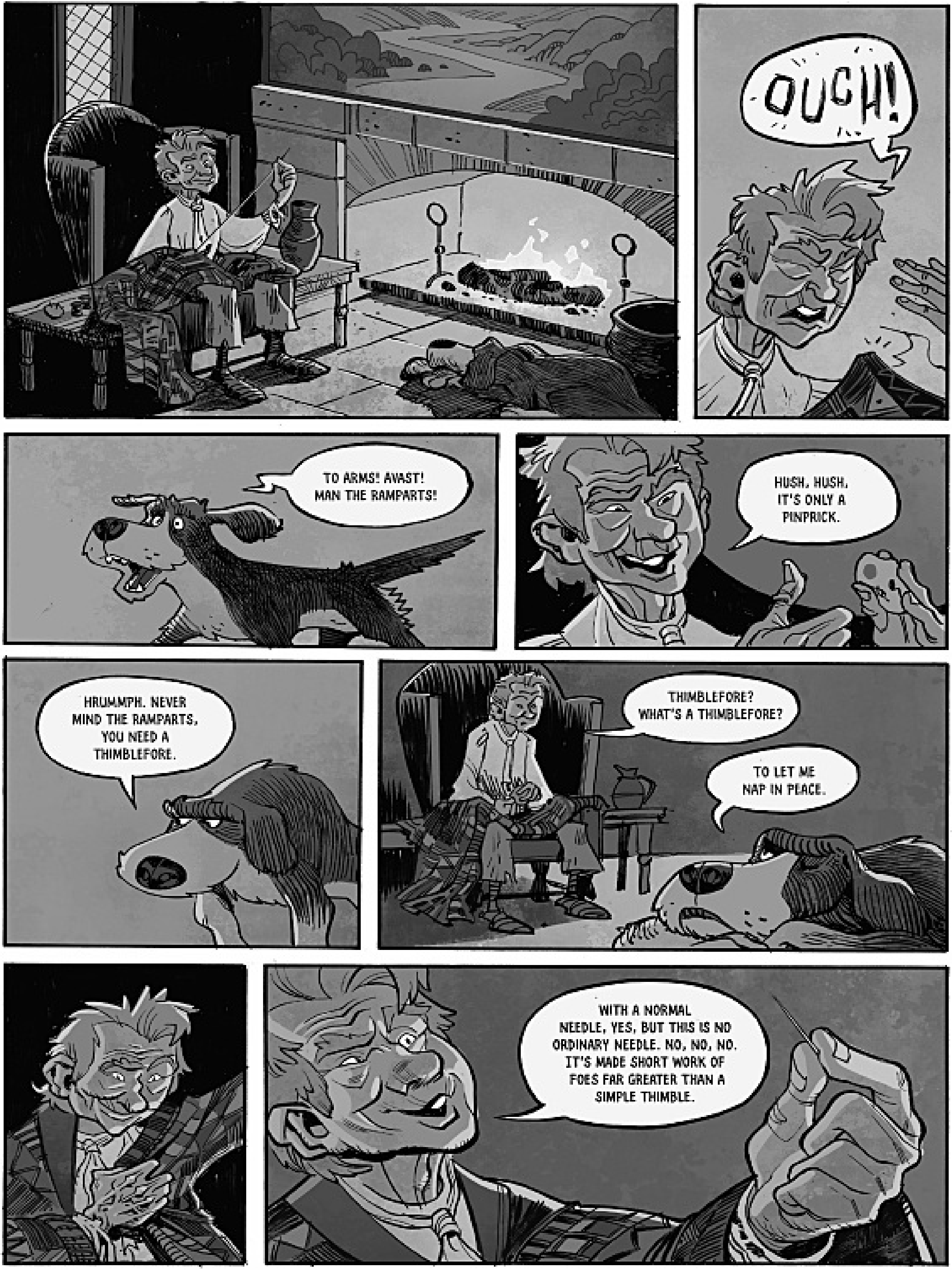
BRANDON DAYTON

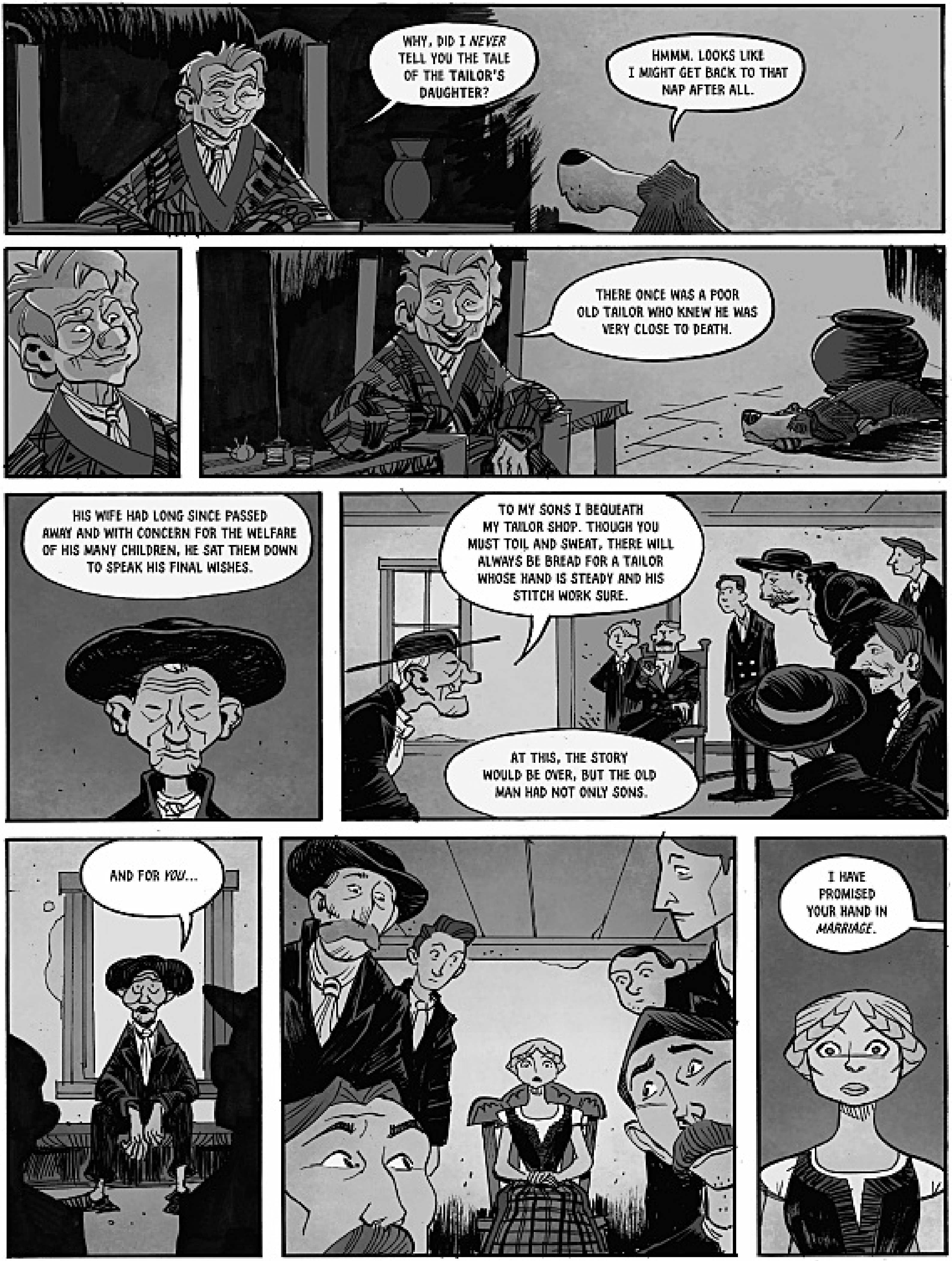
the TAILOR'S DAUGHTER

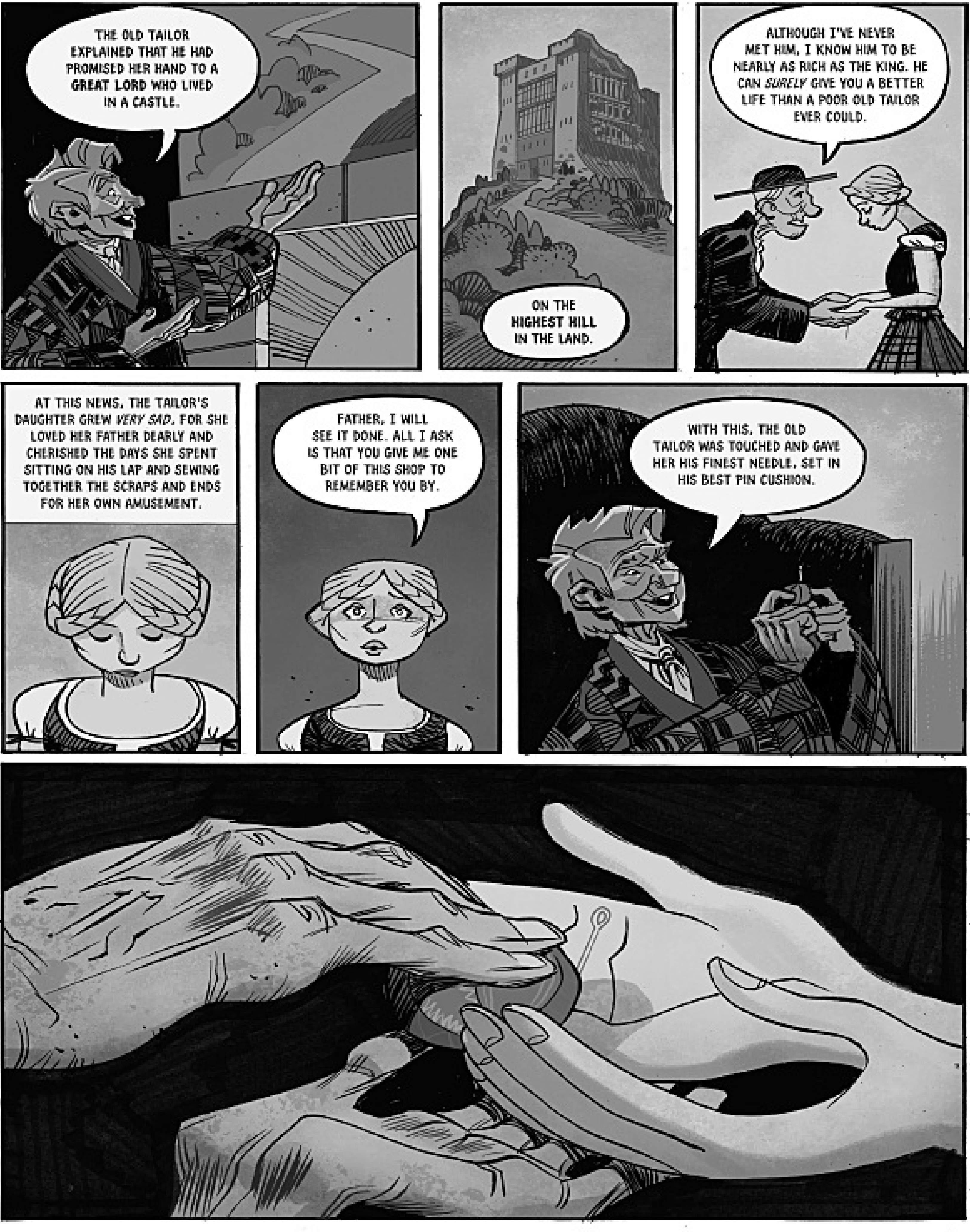
Crafting a story for *The Storyteller: Giants* presented the best kind of challenge. I was given a wide berth to write and illustrate a story with my own voice, but the one stipulation was that the story had to be about giants and had to be based on a traditional fairytale—or fairy tales. Personally, I also wanted a story that fit with the tone of the original TV series and the cleverness of Anthony Minghella's writing. There is something about limitations like this that I find challenging and exciting. It gets you out of your comfort zone and helps you to be creative. In particular, there were a lot more words in this story than I'm normally used to using and the pace had to be quicker.

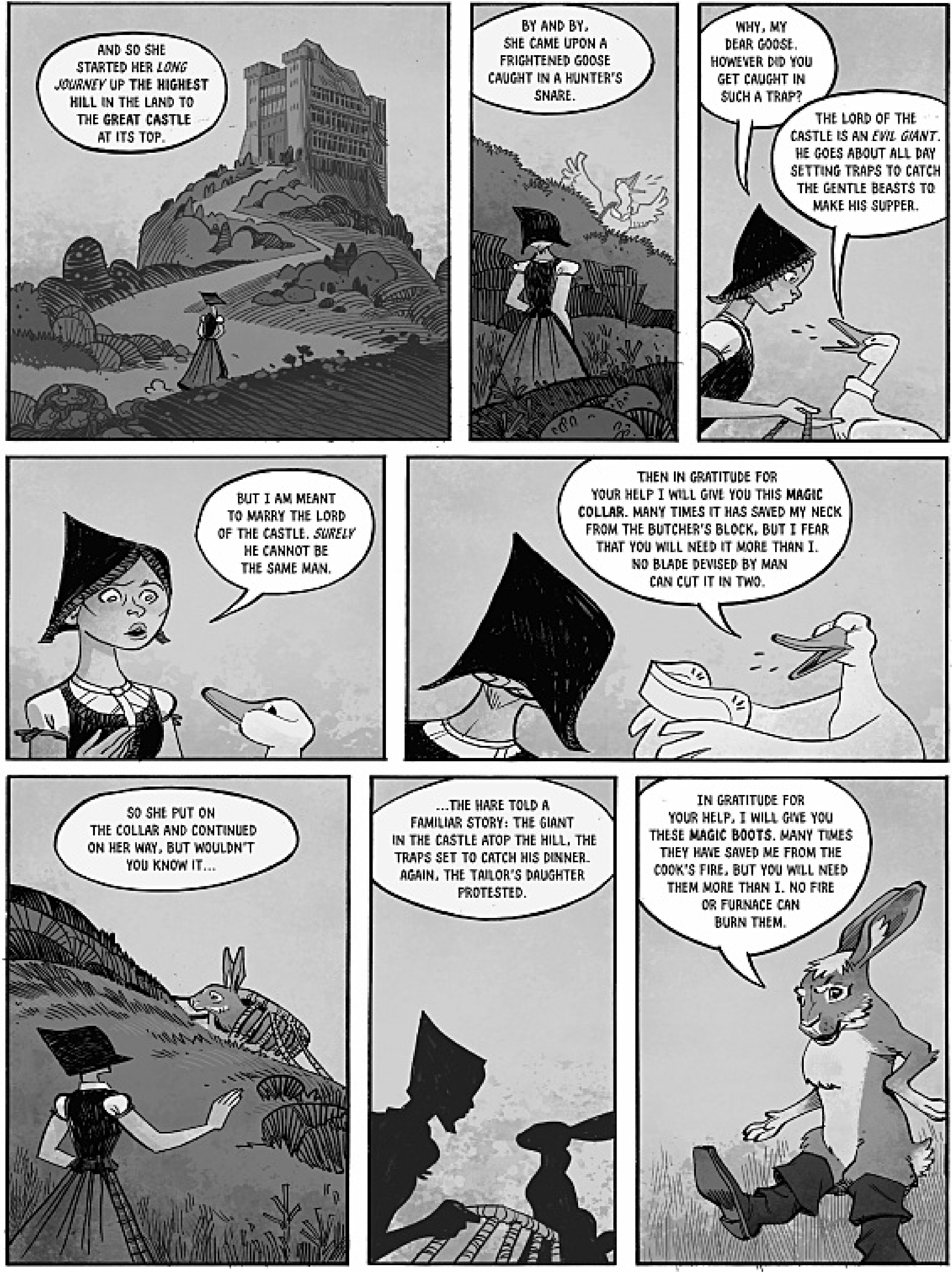
I crammed for a couple of days, reading every fairytale collection I could find and watching episodes of the TV series. I was drawn to several stories that followed a similar pattern—a hero finding themselves in servitude of a monster and either redeeming the monster or defeating it. This is the basic idea behind "Bluebeard," "Beauty and the Beast," and some other more obscure tales like the "Murderous Bridegroom" and the "Master-Maid." They all had elements to them that I really liked, but then fell apart in other areas. My idea was to cobble together my favorite bits of all of the stories into a new narrative: "The Tailor's Daughter."

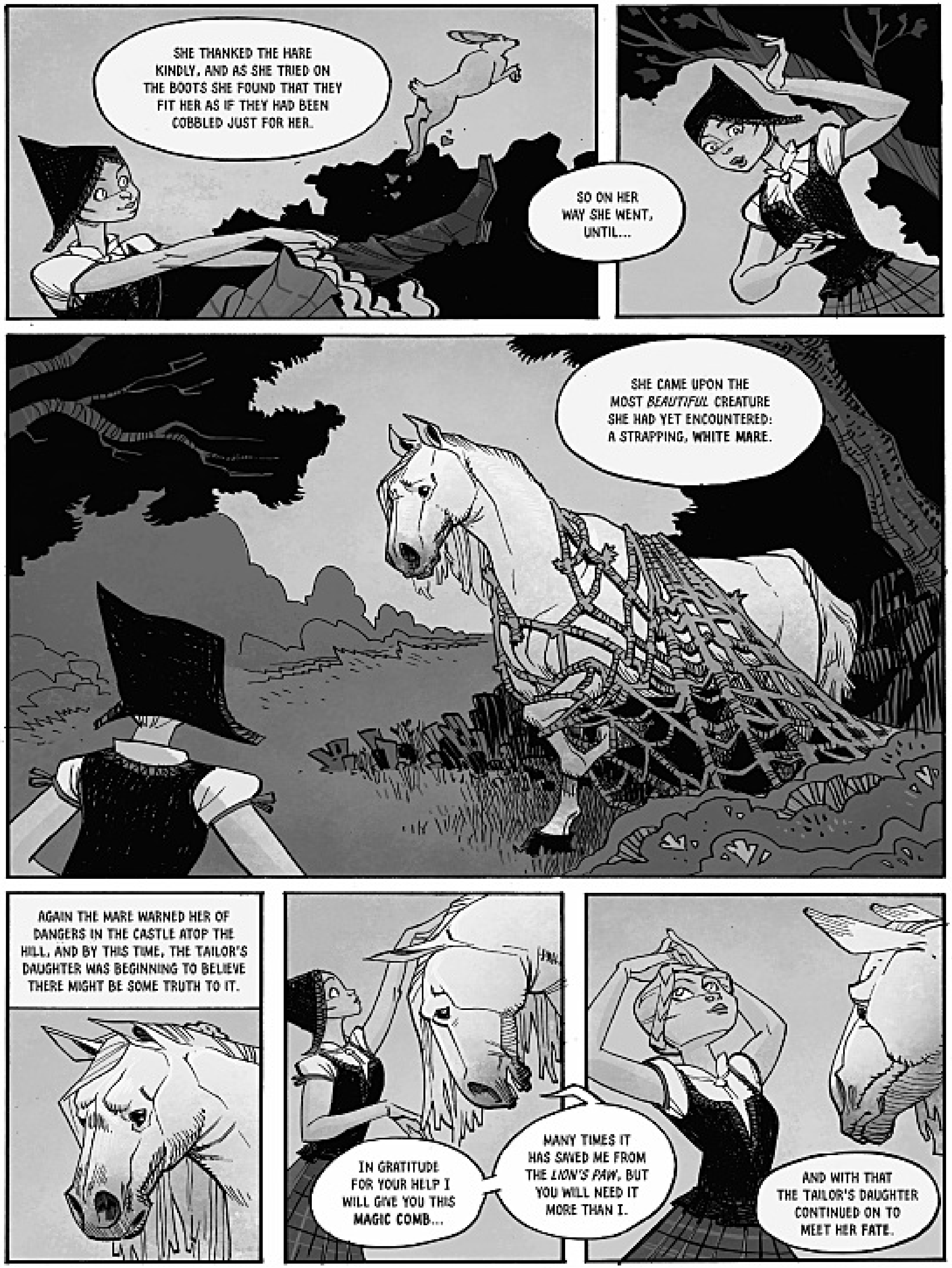
– Brandon Dayton

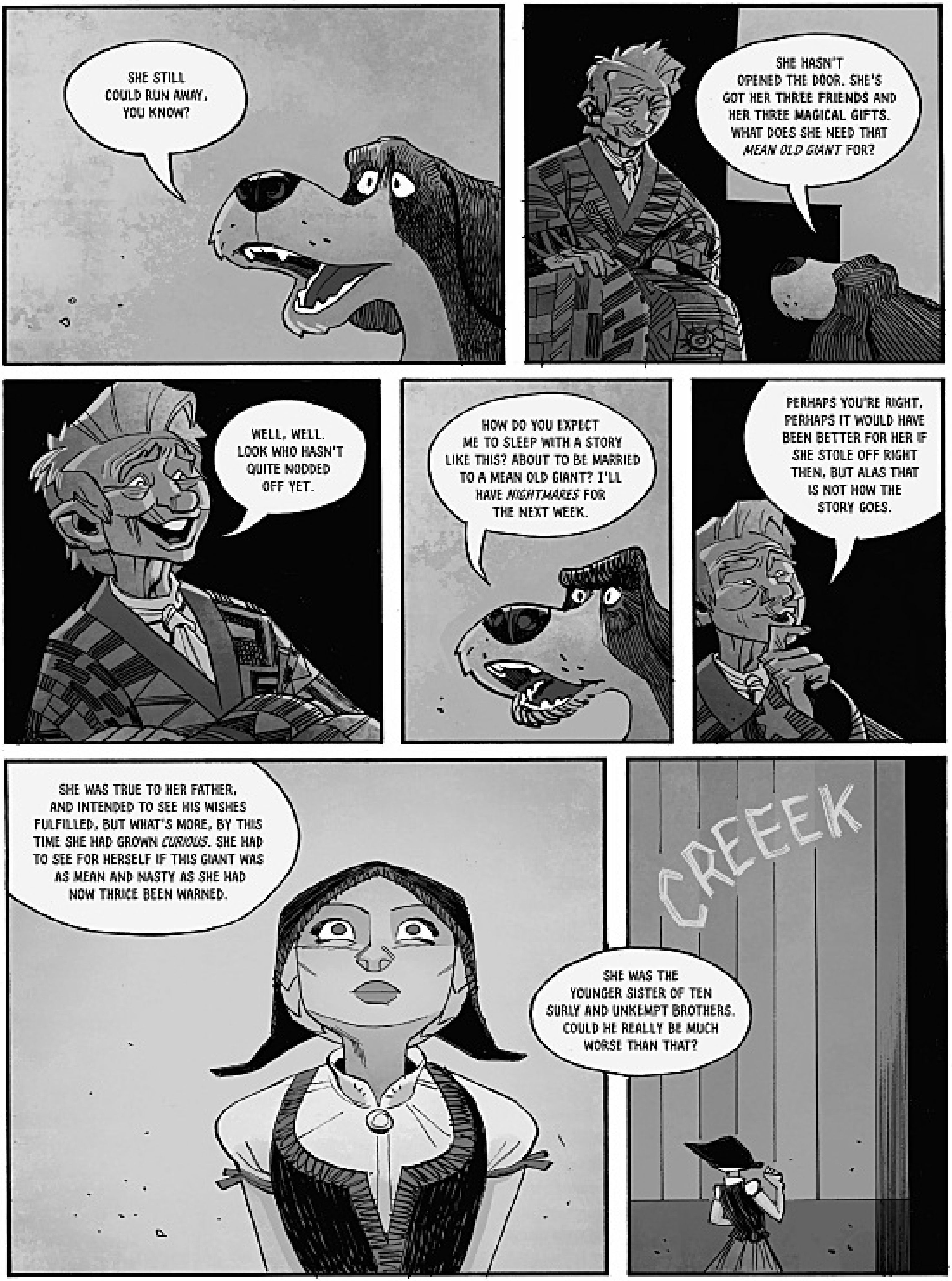

OUCH!
TO ARMS! AVAST! MAN THE RAMPARTS!
HUSH, HUSH, IT'S ONLY A PINPRICK.
HRUMMPH. NEVER MIND THE RAMPARTS, YOU NEED A THIMBLEFORE.
THIMBLEFORE? WHAT'S A THIMBLEFORE?
TO LET ME NAP IN PEACE.
WITH A NORMAL NEEDLE, YES, BUT THIS IS NO ORDINARY NEEDLE. NO, NO, NO. IT'S MADE *SHORT* WORK OF FOES FAR GREATER THAN A SIMPLE THIMBLE.

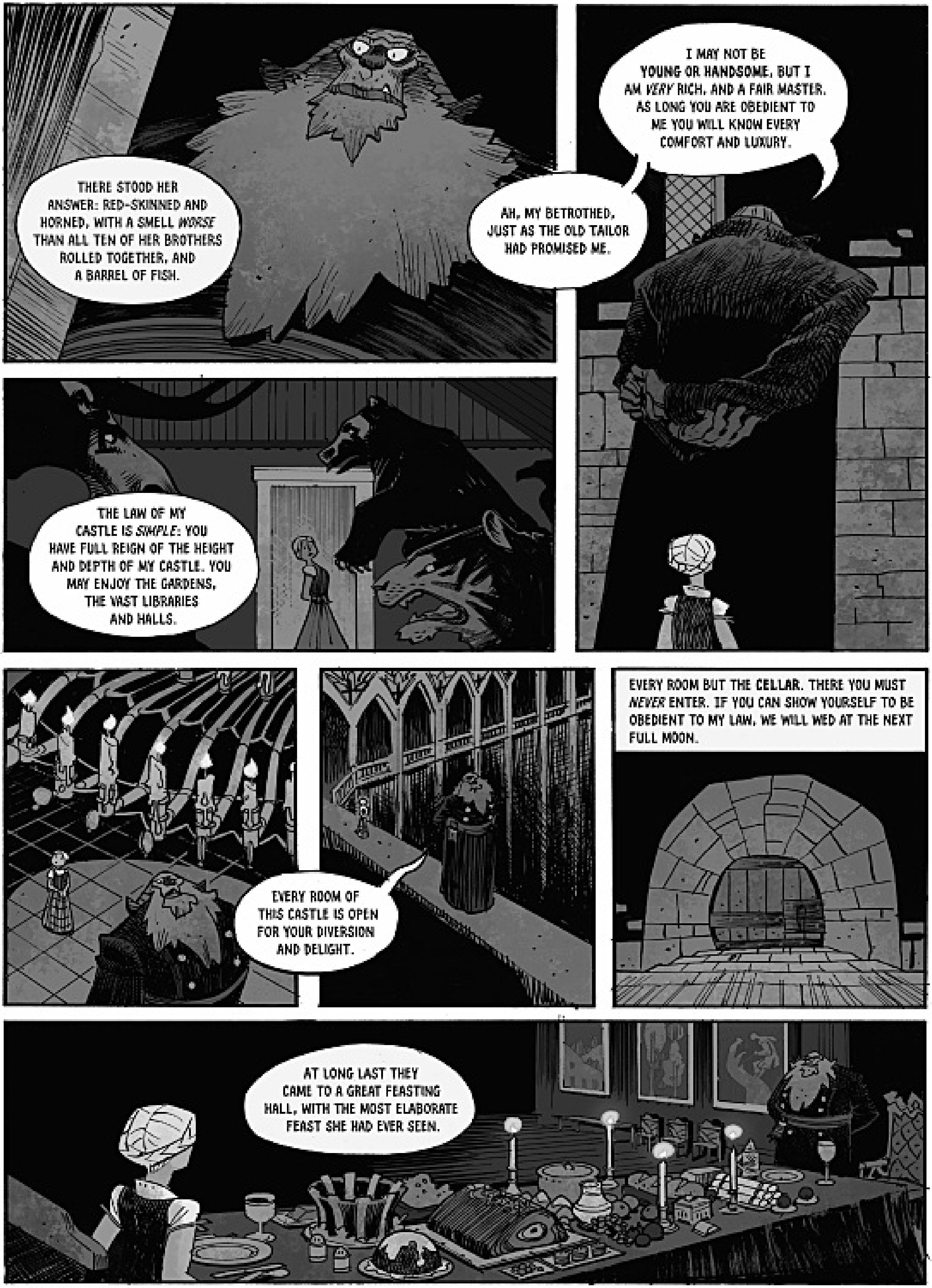

WHY, DID I *NEVER* TELL YOU THE TALE OF THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER?
HMMM. LOOKS LIKE I MIGHT GET BACK TO THAT NAP AFTER ALL.
THERE ONCE WAS A POOR OLD TAILOR WHO KNEW HE WAS VERY CLOSE TO DEATH.
HIS WIFE HAD LONG *SINCE* PASSED AWAY AND WITH CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS MANY CHILDREN, HE SAT THEM DOWN TO SPEAK HIS FINAL WISHES.
TO MY SONS I BEQUEATH MY TAILOR SHOP. THOUGH YOU MUST TOIL AND *SWEAT*, THERE WILL *ALWAYS* BE BREAD FOR A TAILOR WHOSE HAND IS STEADY AND HIS STITCH WORK *SURE*.
AT THIS, THE STORY WOULD BE OVER, BUT THE OLD MAN HAD NOT ONLY *SONS*.
AND FOR *YOU*...
I HAVE PROMISED YOUR HAND IN *MARRIAGE*.

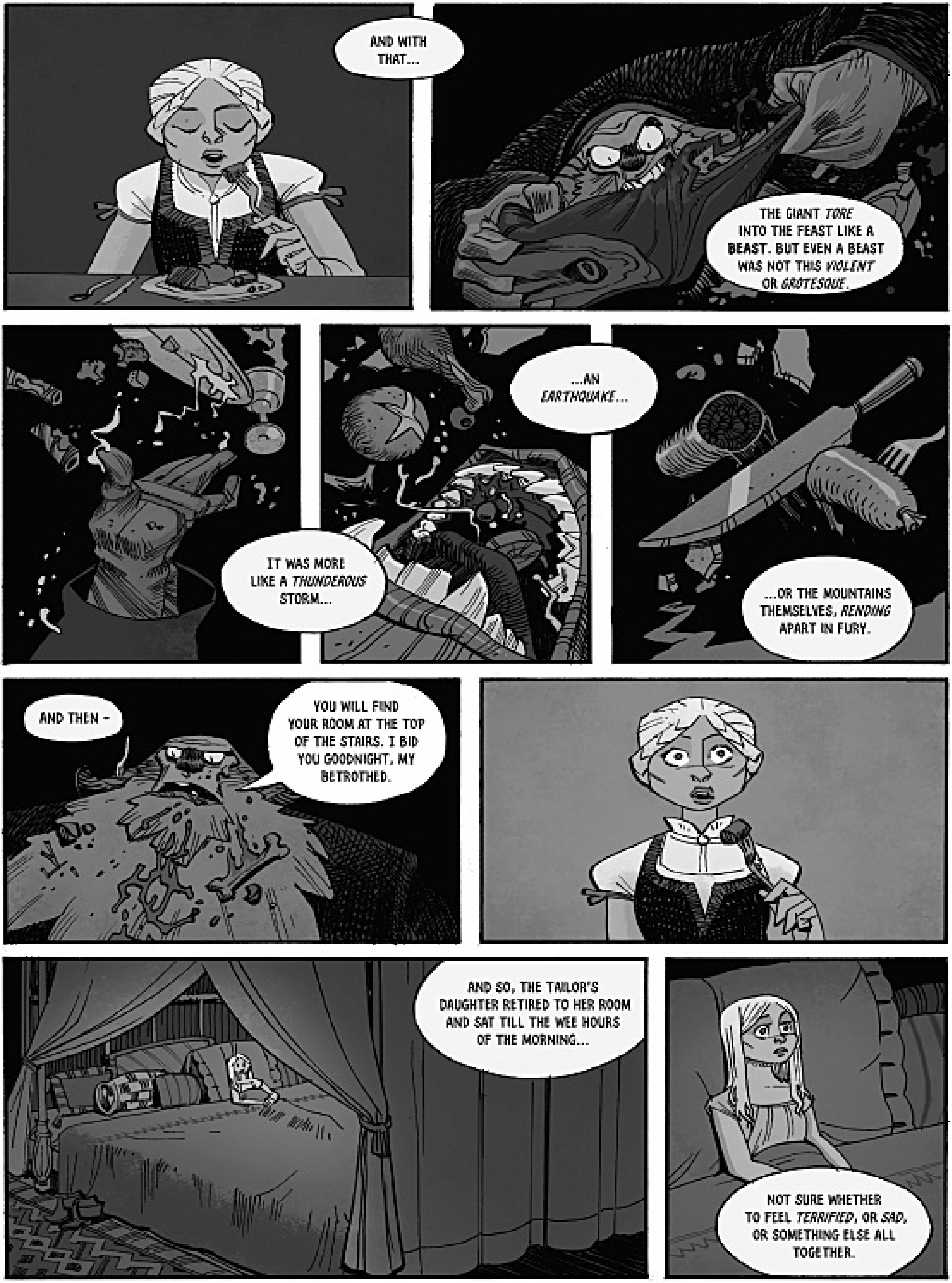

THE OLD TAILOR EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD PROMISED HER HAND TO A GREAT LORD WHO LIVED IN A CASTLE.
ON THE **HIGHEST HILL** IN THE LAND.
ALTHOUGH I'VE NEVER MET HIM, I KNOW HIM TO BE NEARLY AS RICH AS THE KING. HE CAN *SURELY* GIVE YOU A BETTER LIFE THAN A POOR OLD TAILOR EVER COULD.
AT THIS NEWS, THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER GREW *VERY SAD*, FOR SHE LOVED HER FATHER DEARLY AND CHERISHED THE DAYS SHE SPENT SITTING ON HIS LAP AND SEWING TOGETHER THE SCRAPS AND ENDS FOR HER OWN AMUSEMENT.
FATHER, I WILL SEE IT DONE. ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU GIVE ME ONE BIT OF THIS *SHOP* TO REMEMBER YOU BY.
WITH THIS, THE OLD TAILOR WAS TOUCHED AND GAVE HER HIS FINEST NEEDLE, SET IN HIS BEST PIN CUSHION.

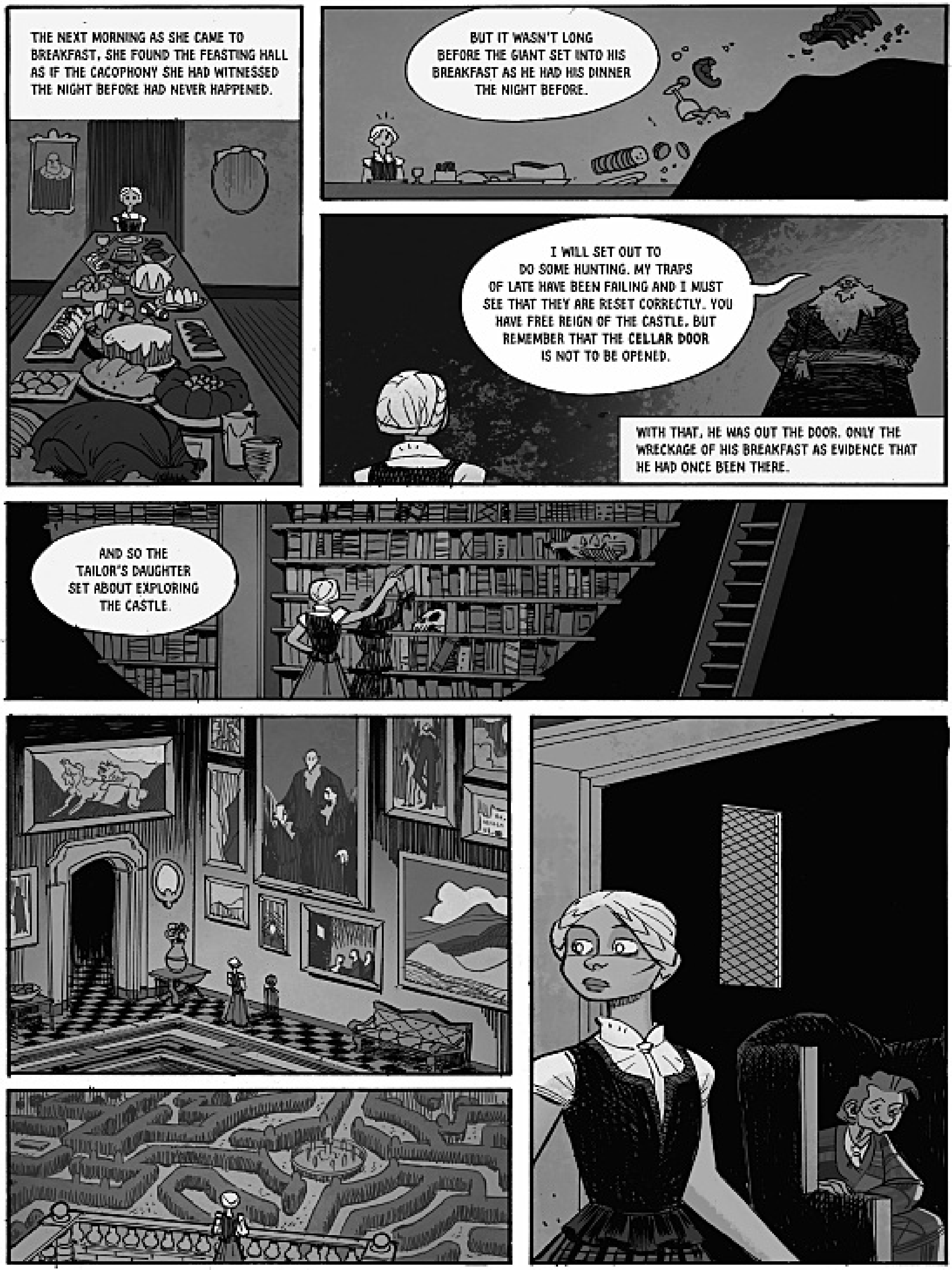

AND SO SHE STARTED HER *LONG JOURNEY* UP THE HIGHEST HILL IN THE LAND TO THE GREAT CASTLE AT ITS TOP.
BY AND BY, SHE CAME UPON A FRIGHTENED GOOSE CAUGHT IN A HUNTER'S SNARE.
WHY, MY DEAR GOOSE. HOWEVER DID YOU GET CAUGHT IN SUCH A TRAP?
THE LORD OF THE CASTLE IS AN *EVIL GIANT*. HE GOES ABOUT ALL DAY SETTING TRAPS TO CATCH THE GENTLE BEASTS TO MAKE HIS SUPPER.
BUT I AM MEANT TO MARRY THE LORD OF THE CASTLE. *SURELY* HE CANNOT BE THE SAME MAN.
THEN IN GRATITUDE FOR YOUR HELP I WILL GIVE YOU THIS MAGIC COLLAR. MANY TIMES IT HAS *SAVED* MY NECK FROM THE BUTCHER'S BLOCK, BUT I FEAR THAT YOU WILL NEED IT MORE THAN I. NO BLADE DEVISED BY MAN CAN CUT IT IN TWO.
SO SHE PUT ON THE COLLAR AND CONTINUED ON HER WAY, BUT WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT...
...THE HARE TOLD A FAMILIAR STORY: THE GIANT IN THE CASTLE ATOP THE HILL, THE TRAPS SET TO CATCH HIS DINNER. AGAIN, THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER PROTESTED.
IN GRATITUDE FOR YOUR HELP, I WILL GIVE YOU THESE MAGIC BOOTS. MANY TIMES THEY HAVE *SAVED* ME FROM THE COOK'S FIRE, BUT YOU WILL NEED THEM MORE THAN I. NO FIRE OR FURNACE CAN BURN THEM.

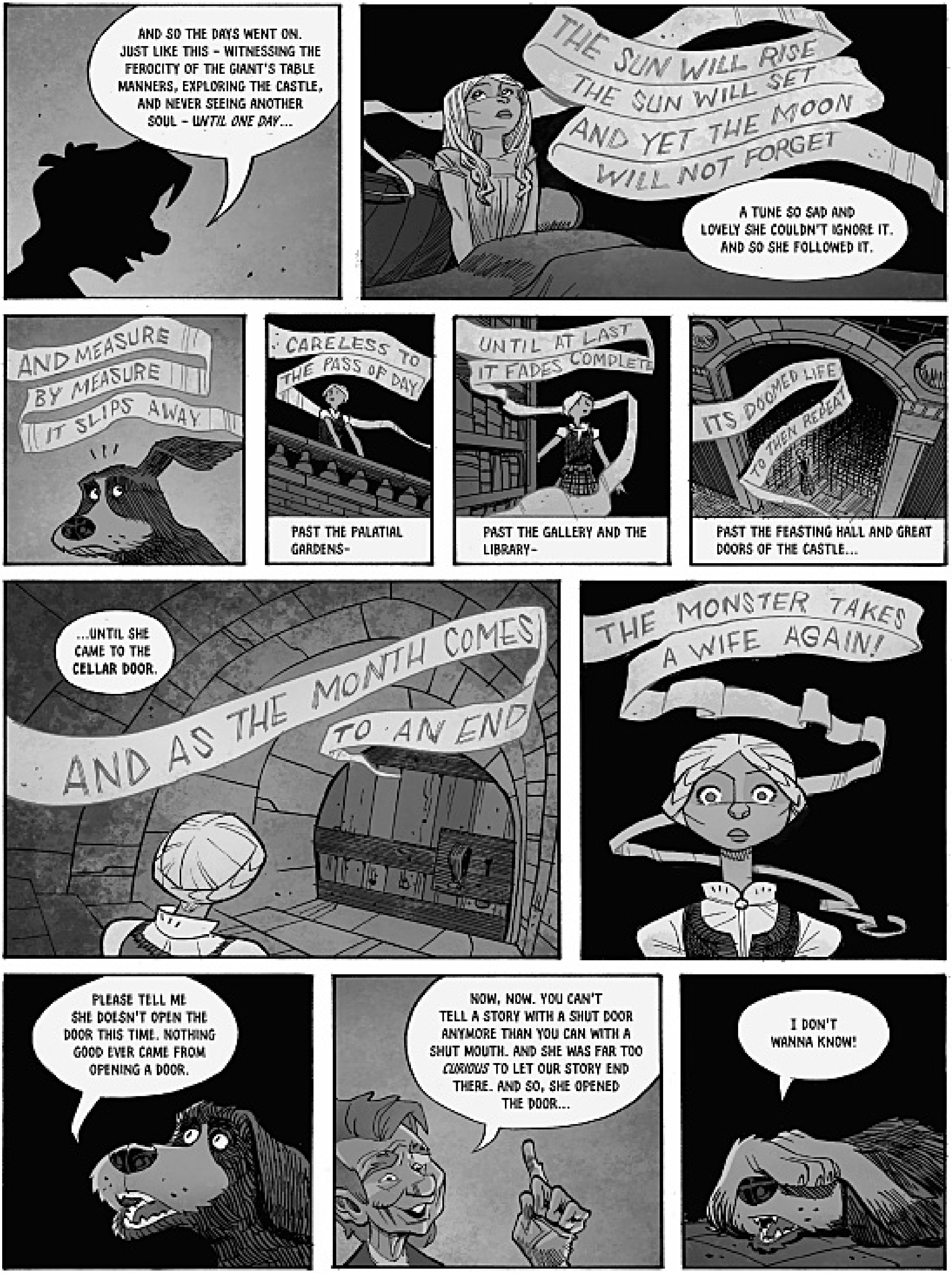

SHE THANKED THE HARE KINDLY, AND AS SHE TRIED ON THE BOOTS SHE FOUND THAT THEY FIT HER AS IF THEY HAD BEEN COBBLED JUST FOR HER.
SO ON HER WAY SHE WENT, UNTIL...
SHE CAME UPON THE MOST *BEAUTIFUL* CREATURE SHE HAD YET ENCOUNTERED: A STRAPPING, WHITE MARE.
AGAIN THE MARE WARNED HER OF DANGERS IN THE CASTLE ATOP THE HILL, AND BY THIS TIME, THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER WAS BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THERE MIGHT BE SOME TRUTH TO IT.
IN GRATITUDE FOR YOUR HELP I WILL GIVE YOU THIS MAGIC COMB...
MANY TIMES IT HAS SAVED ME FROM THE *LION'S PAW*, BUT YOU WILL NEED IT MORE THAN I.
AND WITH THAT THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER CONTINUED ON TO MEET HER FATE.

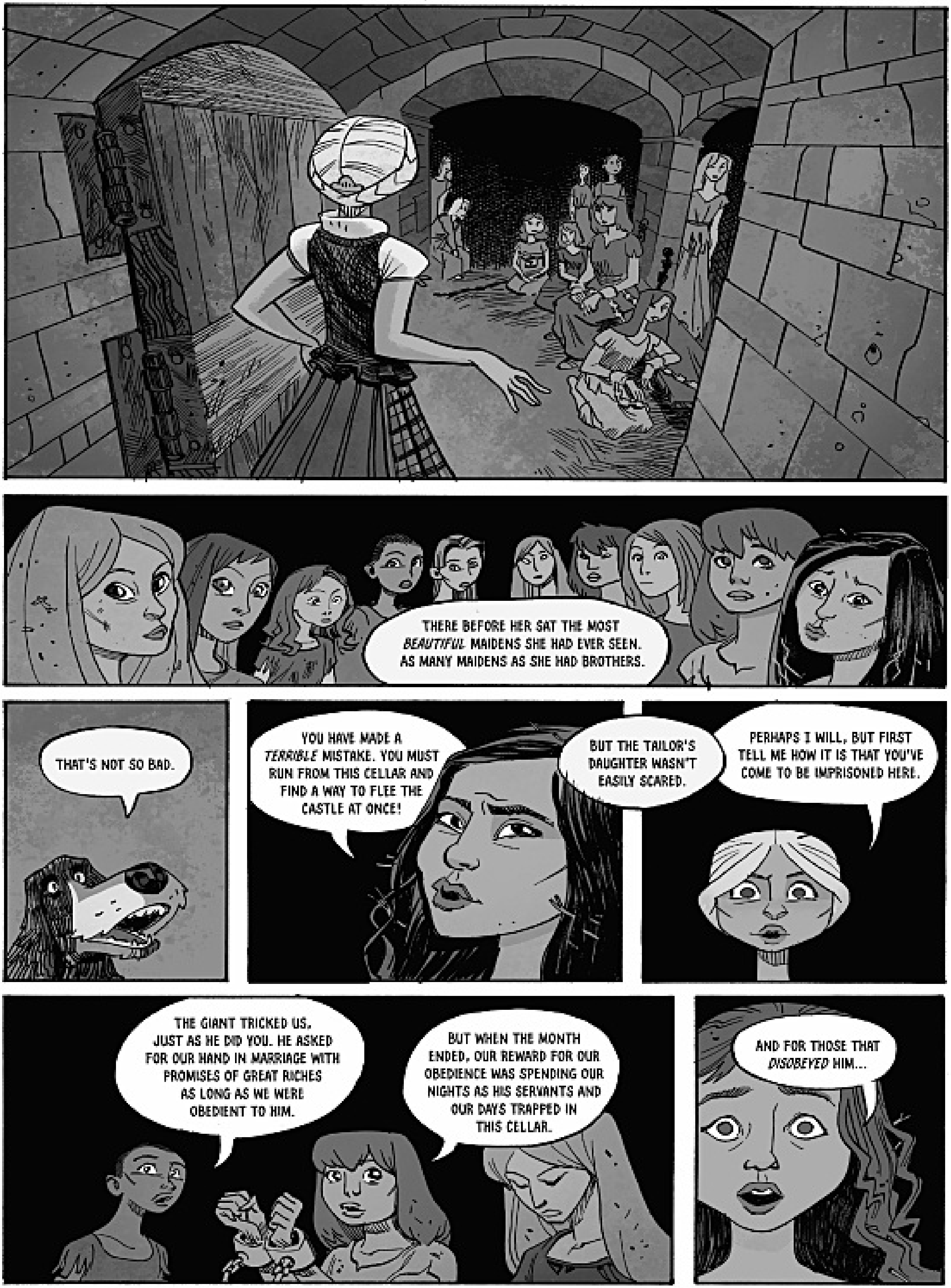

SHE STILL COULD RUN AWAY, YOU KNOW?
SHE HASN'T OPENED THE DOOR. SHE'S GOT HER THREE FRIENDS AND HER THREE MAGICAL GIFTS. WHAT DOES SHE NEED THAT *MEAN OLD GIANT* FOR?
WELL, WELL. LOOK WHO HASN'T QUITE NODDED OFF YET.
HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO SLEEP WITH A STORY LIKE THIS? ABOUT TO BE MARRIED TO A MEAN OLD GIANT? I'LL HAVE *NIGHTMARES* FOR THE NEXT WEEK.
PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT. PERHAPS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR HER IF SHE STOLE OFF RIGHT THEN, BUT ALAS THAT IS NOT HOW THE STORY GOES.
SHE WAS TRUE TO HER FATHER, AND INTENDED TO SEE HIS WISHES FULFILLED, BUT WHAT'S MORE, BY THIS TIME SHE HAD GROWN *CURIOUS*. SHE HAD TO SEE FOR HERSELF IF THIS GIANT WAS AS MEAN AND NASTY AS SHE HAD NOW THRICE BEEN WARNED.
CREEEK
SHE WAS THE YOUNGER SISTER OF TEN SURLY AND UNKEMPT BROTHERS. COULD HE REALLY BE MUCH WORSE THAN THAT?

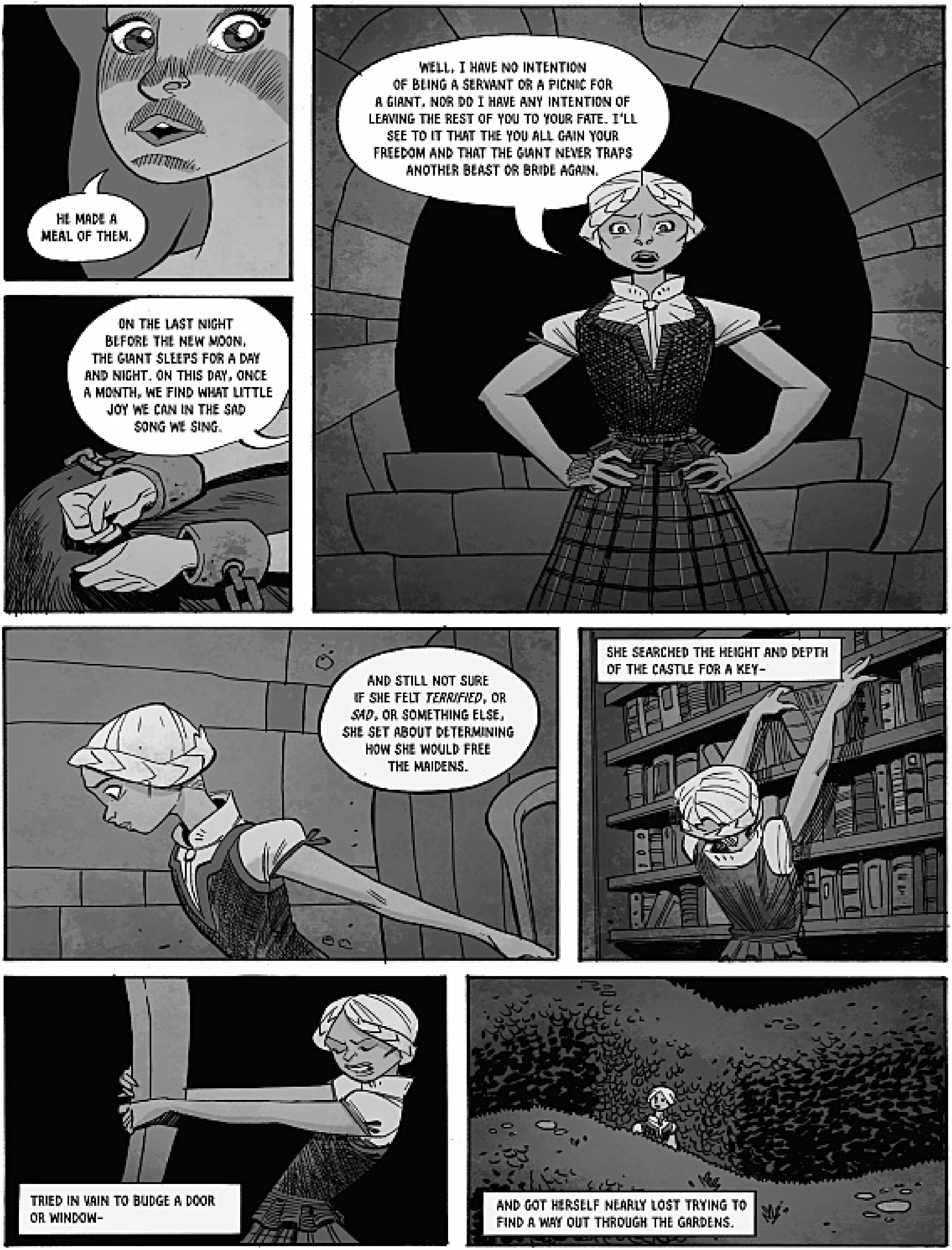

THERE STOOD HER ANSWER: RED-SKINNED AND HORNED, WITH A SMELL *WORSE* THAN ALL TEN OF HER BROTHERS ROLLED TOGETHER, AND A BARREL OF FISH.
AH, MY BETROTHED, JUST AS THE OLD TAILOR HAD PROMISED ME.
I MAY NOT BE YOUNG OR HANDSOME, BUT I AM *VERY* RICH, AND A FAIR MASTER. AS LONG YOU ARE OBEDIENT TO ME YOU WILL KNOW EVERY COMFORT AND LUXURY.
THE LAW OF MY CASTLE IS *SIMPLE*: YOU HAVE FULL REIGN OF THE HEIGHT AND DEPTH OF MY CASTLE. YOU MAY ENJOY THE GARDENS, THE VAST LIBRARIES AND HALLS.
EVERY ROOM OF THIS CASTLE IS OPEN FOR YOUR DIVERSION AND DELIGHT.
EVERY ROOM BUT THE CELLAR. THERE YOU MUST *NEVER* ENTER. IF YOU CAN SHOW YOURSELF TO BE OBEDIENT TO MY LAW, WE WILL WED AT THE NEXT FULL MOON.
AT LONG LAST THEY CAME TO A GREAT FEASTING HALL, WITH THE MOST ELABORATE FEAST SHE HAD EVER SEEN.

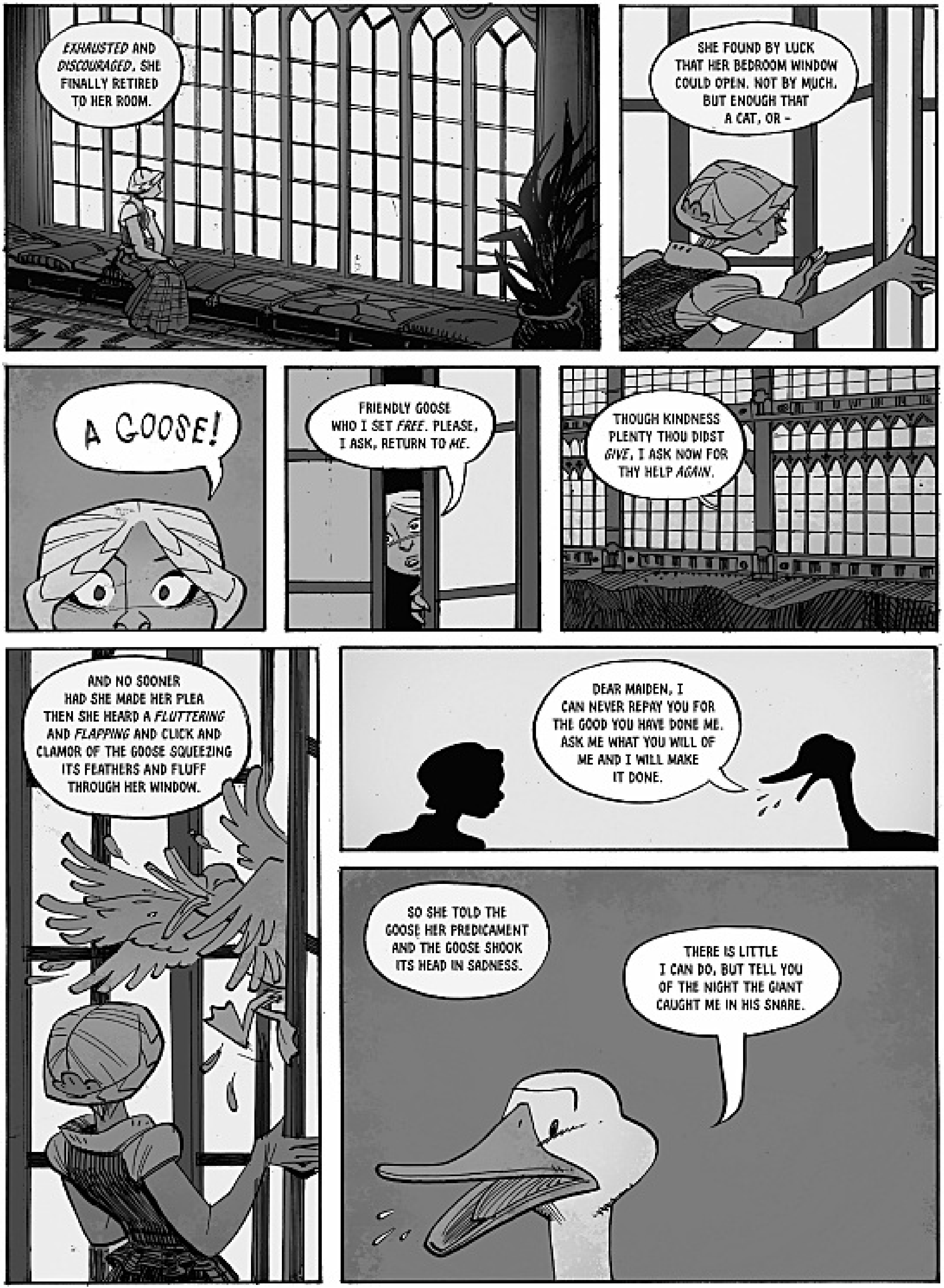

AND WITH THAT...
THE GIANT *TORE* INTO THE FEAST LIKE A BEAST. BUT EVEN A BEAST WAS NOT THIS *VIOLENT* OR *GROTESQUE*.
IT WAS MORE LIKE A *THUNDEROUS* STORM...
...AN *EARTHQUAKE*...
...OR THE MOUNTAINS THEMSELVES, *RENDING* APART IN FURY.
AND THEN –
YOU WILL FIND YOUR ROOM AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. I BID YOU GOODNIGHT, MY BETROTHED.
AND SO, THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER RETIRED TO HER ROOM AND SAT TILL THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING...
NOT SURE WHETHER TO FEEL *TERRIFIED*, OR *SAD*, OR SOMETHING ELSE ALL TOGETHER.

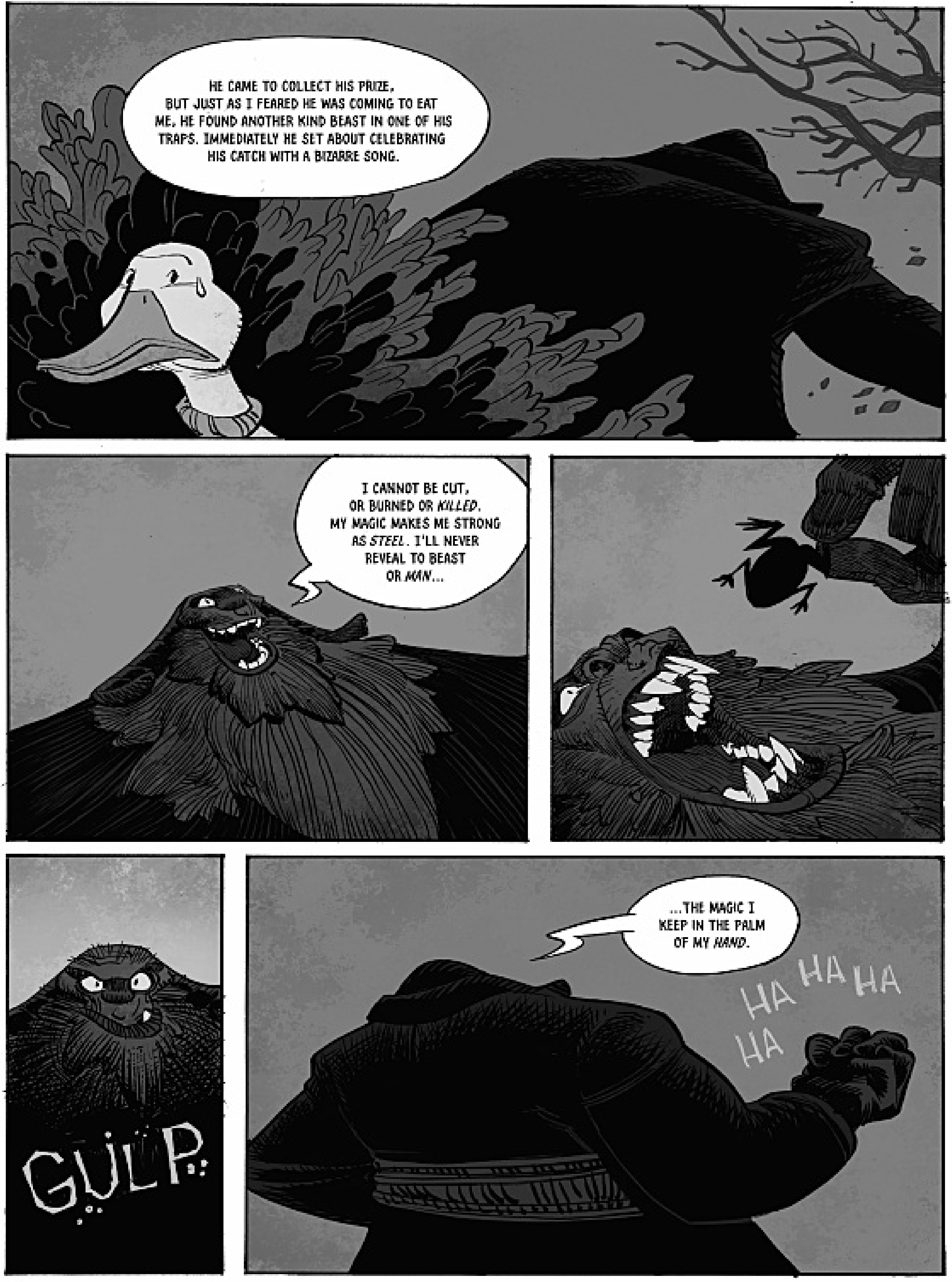

THE NEXT MORNING AS SHE CAME TO BREAKFAST, SHE FOUND THE FEASTING HALL AS IF THE CACOPHONY SHE HAD WITNESSED THE NIGHT BEFORE HAD NEVER HAPPENED.
BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE GIANT SET INTO HIS BREAKFAST AS HE HAD HIS DINNER THE NIGHT BEFORE.
I WILL SET OUT TO DO SOME HUNTING. MY TRAPS OF LATE HAVE BEEN FAILING AND I MUST SEE THAT THEY ARE RESET CORRECTLY. YOU HAVE FREE REIGN OF THE CASTLE. BUT REMEMBER THAT THE CELLAR DOOR IS NOT TO BE OPENED.
WITH THAT, HE WAS OUT THE DOOR. ONLY THE WRECKAGE OF HIS BREAKFAST AS EVIDENCE THAT HE HAD ONCE BEEN THERE.
AND SO THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER SET ABOUT EXPLORING THE CASTLE.

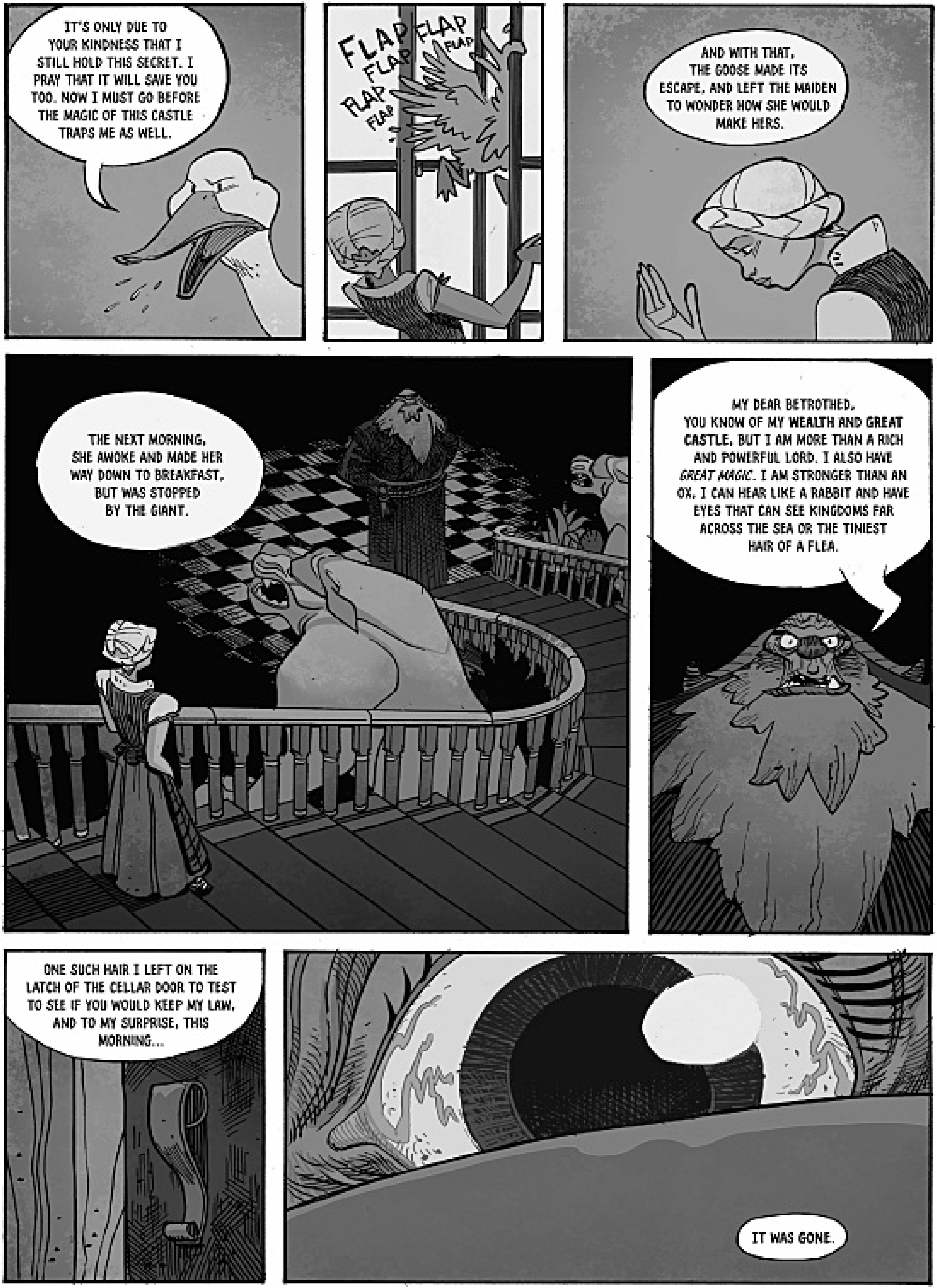

AND SO THE DAYS WENT ON. JUST LIKE THIS - WITNESSING THE FEROCITY OF THE GIANT'S TABLE MANNERS, EXPLORING THE CASTLE, AND NEVER SEEING ANOTHER SOUL - UNTIL ONE DAY...
THE SUN WILL RISE THE SUN WILL SET AND YET THE MOON WILL NOT FORGET
A TUNE SO SAD AND LOVELY SHE COULDN'T IGNORE IT. AND SO SHE FOLLOWED IT.
AND MEASURE BY MEASURE IT SLIPS AWAY
CARELESS TO THE PASS OF DAY
PAST THE PALATIAL GARDENS-
UNTIL AT LAST IT FADES COMPLETE
PAST THE GALLERY AND THE LIBRARY-
ITS DOOMED LIFE TO THEN REPEAT
PAST THE FEASTING HALL AND GREAT DOORS OF THE CASTLE...
...UNTIL SHE CAME TO THE CELLAR DOOR.
AND AS THE MONTH COMES TO AN END
THE MONSTER TAKES A WIFE AGAIN!
PLEASE TELL ME SHE DOESN'T OPEN THE DOOR THIS TIME. NOTHING GOOD EVER CAME FROM OPENING A DOOR.
NOW, NOW. YOU CAN'T TELL A STORY WITH A SHUT DOOR ANYMORE THAN YOU CAN WITH A SHUT MOUTH. AND SHE WAS FAR TOO CURIOUS TO LET OUR STORY END THERE. AND SO, SHE OPENED THE DOOR...
I DON'T WANNA KNOW!

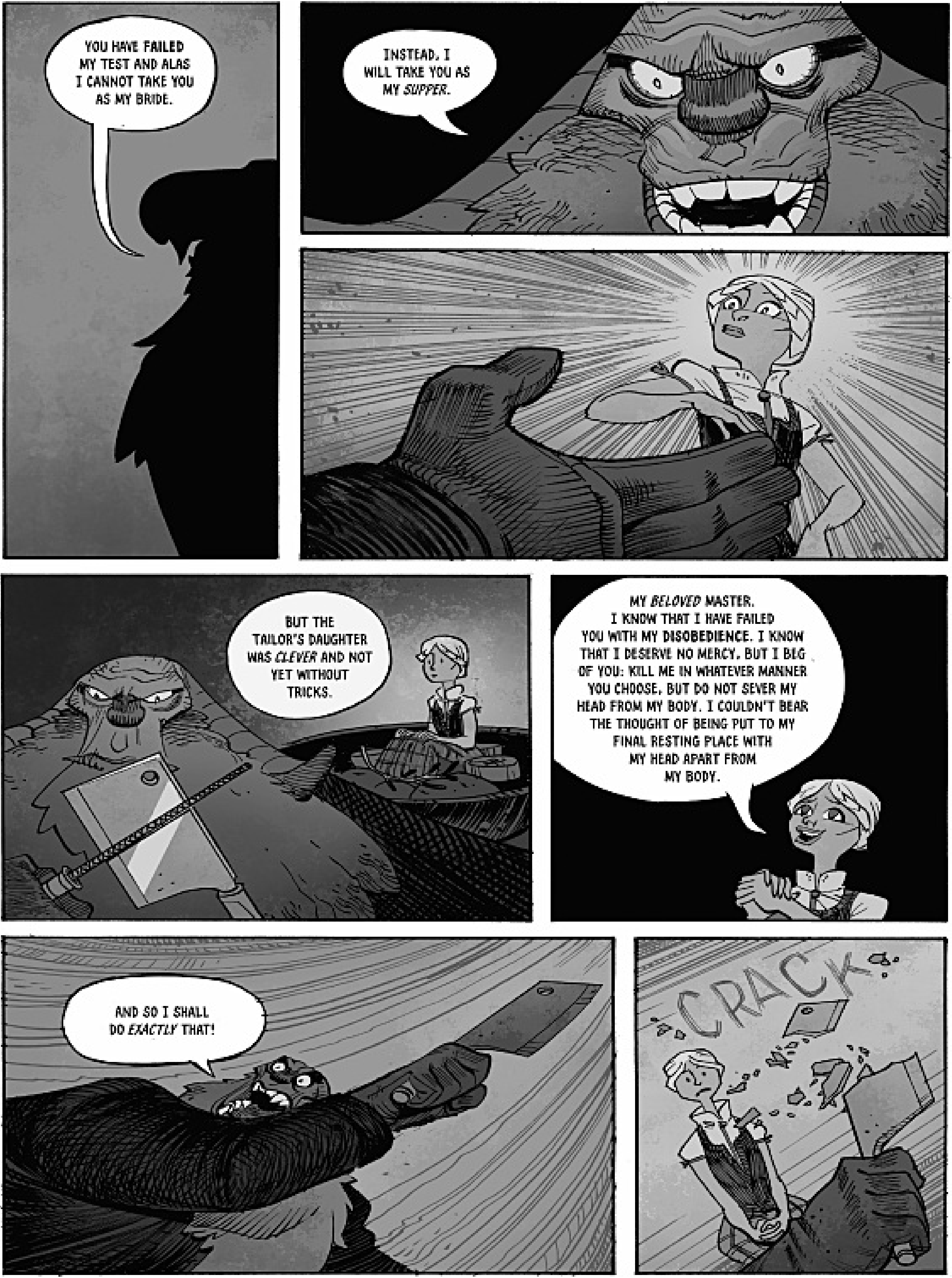

THERE BEFORE HER SAT THE MOST *BEAUTIFUL* MAIDENS SHE HAD EVER SEEN. AS MANY MAIDENS AS SHE HAD BROTHERS.
THAT'S NOT SO BAD.
YOU HAVE MADE A *TERRIBLE* MISTAKE. YOU MUST RUN FROM THIS CELLAR AND FIND A WAY TO FLEE THE CASTLE AT ONCE!
BUT THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER WASN'T EASILY SCARED.
PERHAPS I WILL, BUT FIRST TELL ME HOW IT IS THAT YOU'VE COME TO BE IMPRISONED HERE.
THE GIANT TRICKED US, JUST AS HE DID YOU. HE ASKED FOR OUR HAND IN MARRIAGE WITH PROMISES OF GREAT RICHES AS LONG AS WE WERE OBEDIENT TO HIM.
BUT WHEN THE MONTH ENDED, OUR REWARD FOR OUR OBEDIENCE WAS SPENDING OUR NIGHTS AS HIS SERVANTS AND OUR DAYS TRAPPED IN THIS CELLAR.
AND FOR THOSE THAT *DISOBEYED* HIM...

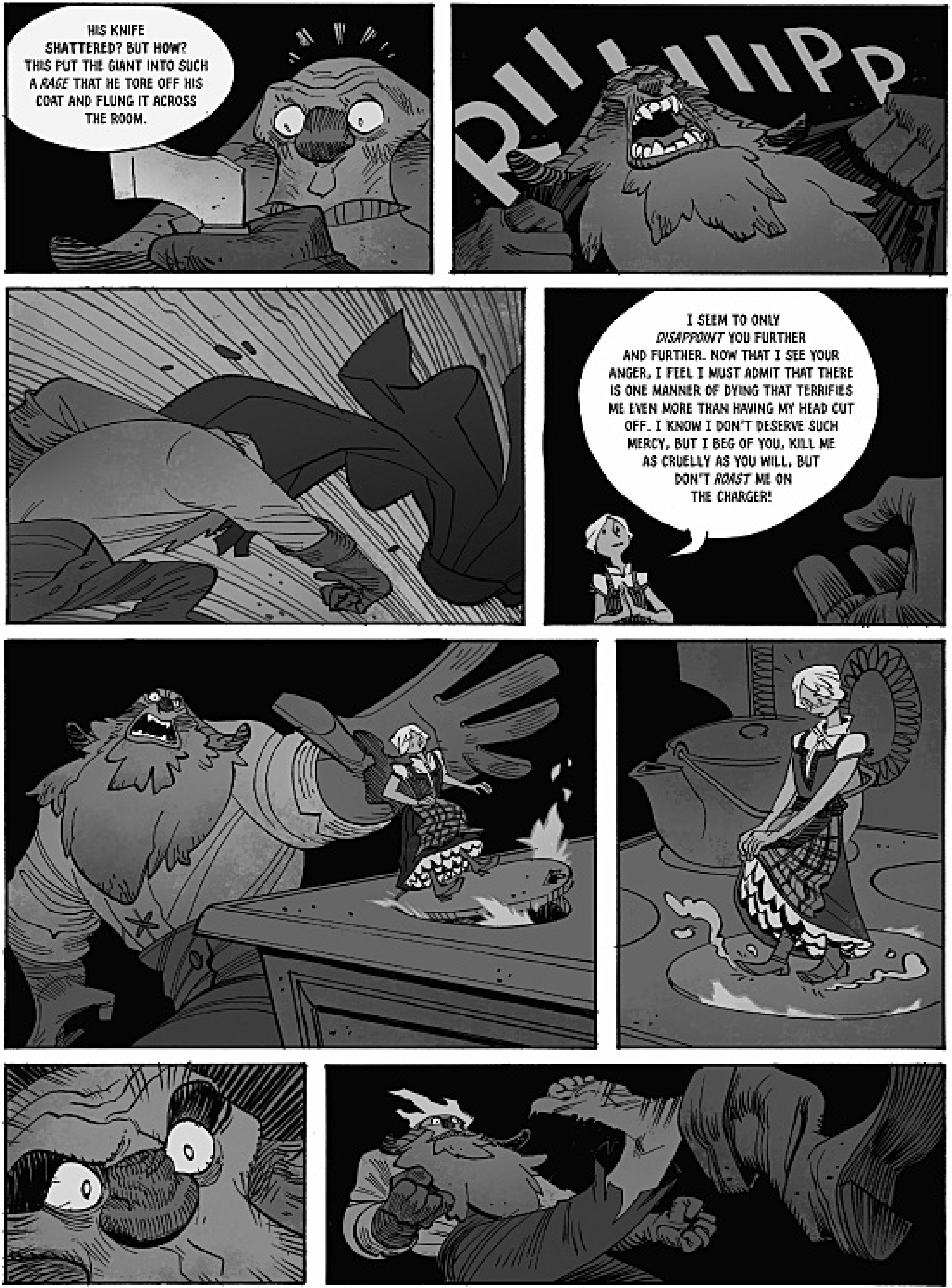

HE MADE A MEAL OF THEM.
ON THE LAST NIGHT BEFORE THE NEW MOON, THE GIANT SLEEPS FOR A DAY AND NIGHT. ON THIS DAY, ONCE A MONTH, WE FIND WHAT LITTLE JOY WE CAN IN THE SAD SONG WE SING.
WELL, I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BEING A SERVANT OR A PICNIC FOR A GIANT, NOR DO I HAVE ANY INTENTION OF LEAVING THE REST OF YOU TO YOUR FATE. I'LL SEE TO IT THAT THE YOU ALL GAIN YOUR FREEDOM AND THAT THE GIANT NEVER TRAPS ANOTHER BEAST OR BRIDE AGAIN.
AND STILL NOT SURE IF SHE FELT *TERRIFIED*, OR *SAD*, OR SOMETHING ELSE, SHE SET ABOUT DETERMINING HOW *SHE* WOULD FREE THE MAIDENS.
SHE SEARCHED THE HEIGHT AND DEPTH OF THE CASTLE FOR A KEY–
TRIED IN VAIN TO BUDGE A DOOR OR WINDOW–
AND GOT HERSELF NEARLY LOST TRYING TO FIND A WAY OUT THROUGH THE GARDENS.

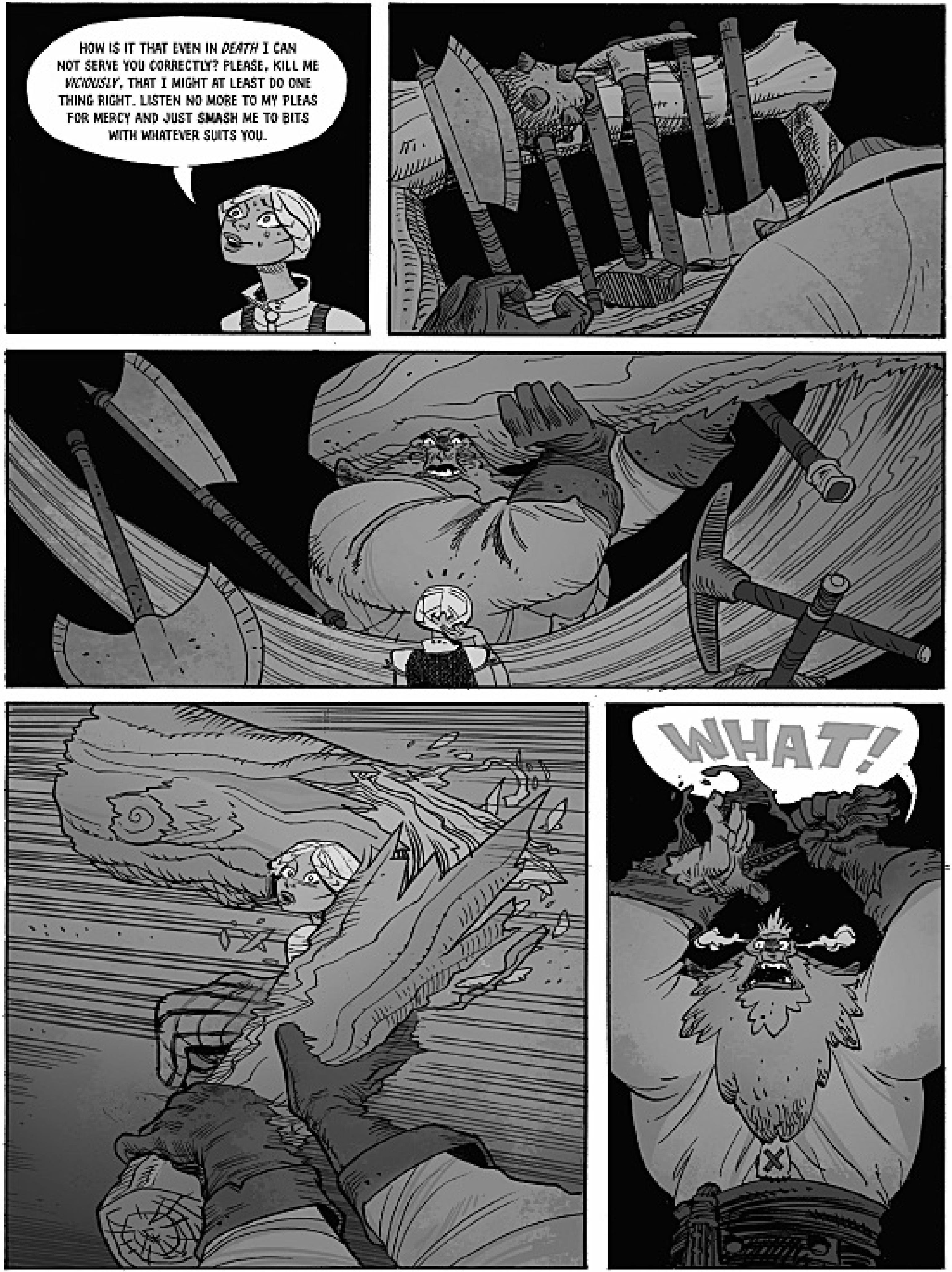

EXHAUSTED AND *DISCOURAGED*, SHE FINALLY RETIRED TO HER ROOM.
SHE FOUND BY LUCK THAT HER BEDROOM WINDOW COULD OPEN. NOT BY MUCH, BUT ENOUGH THAT A CAT, OR –
A GOOSE!
FRIENDLY GOOSE WHO I SET *FREE*. PLEASE, I ASK, RETURN TO *ME*.
THOUGH KINDNESS PLENTY THOU DIDST *GIVE*, I ASK NOW FOR THY HELP *AGAIN*.
AND NO SOONER HAD SHE MADE HER PLEA THEN SHE HEARD A *FLUTTERING* AND *FLAPPING* AND CLICK AND CLAMOR OF THE GOOSE *SQUEEZING* ITS FEATHERS AND FLUFF THROUGH HER WINDOW.
DEAR MAIDEN, I CAN NEVER REPAY YOU FOR THE GOOD YOU HAVE DONE ME. ASK ME WHAT YOU WILL OF ME AND I WILL MAKE IT DONE.
SO SHE TOLD THE GOOSE HER PREDICAMENT AND THE GOOSE SHOOK ITS HEAD IN SADNESS.
THERE IS LITTLE I CAN DO, BUT TELL YOU OF THE NIGHT THE GIANT CAUGHT ME IN HIS SNARE.

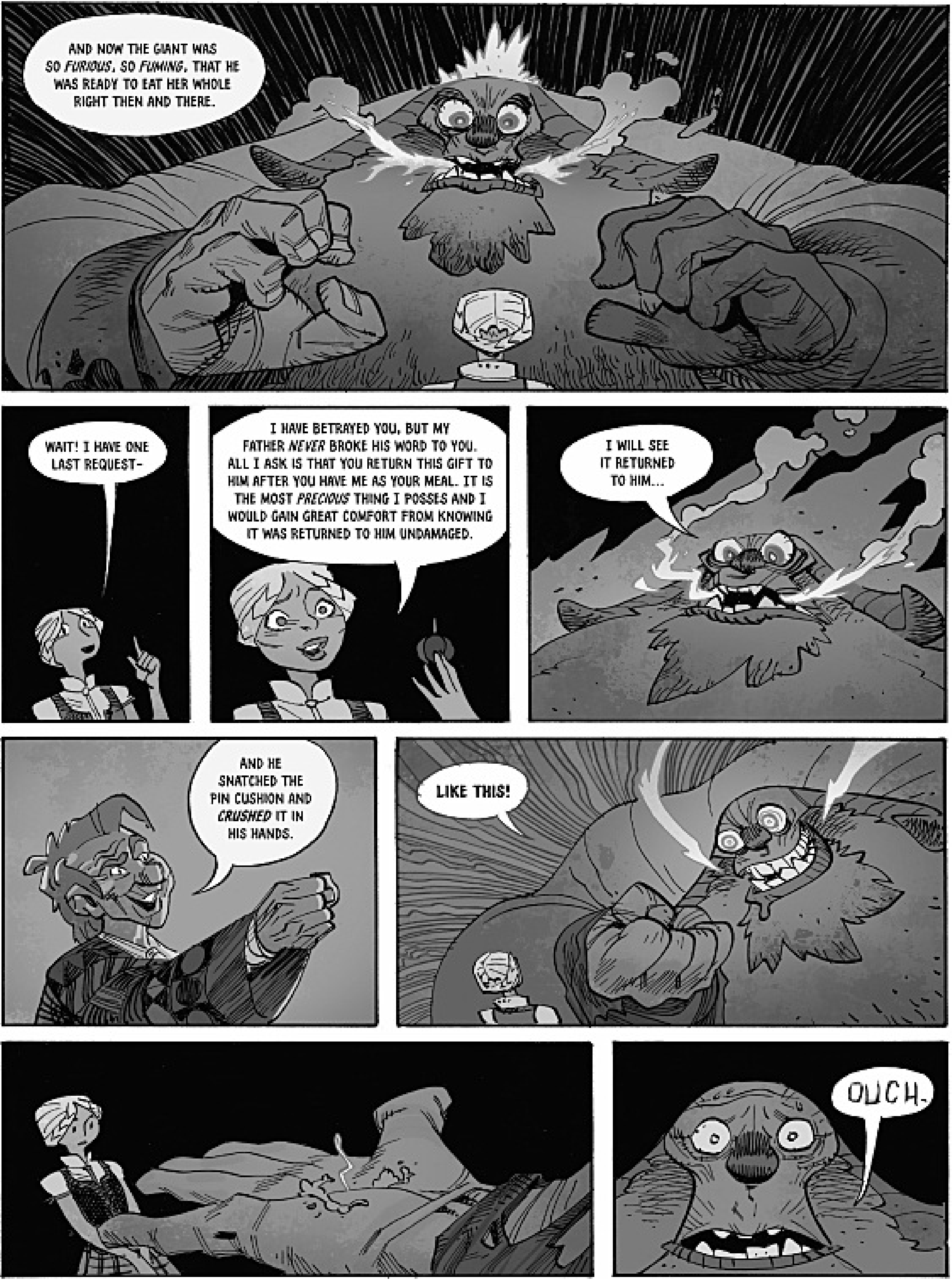

HE CAME TO COLLECT HIS PRIZE, BUT JUST AS I FEARED HE WAS COMING TO EAT ME, HE FOUND ANOTHER KIND BEAST IN ONE OF HIS TRAPS. IMMEDIATELY HE SET ABOUT CELEBRATING HIS CATCH WITH A BIZARRE SONG.
I CANNOT BE CUT, OR BURNED OR *KILLED*. MY MAGIC MAKES ME STRONG AS *STEEL*. I'LL NEVER REVEAL TO BEAST OR *MAN*...
GULP
...THE MAGIC I KEEP IN THE PALM OF MY *HAND*.
HA HA HA HA

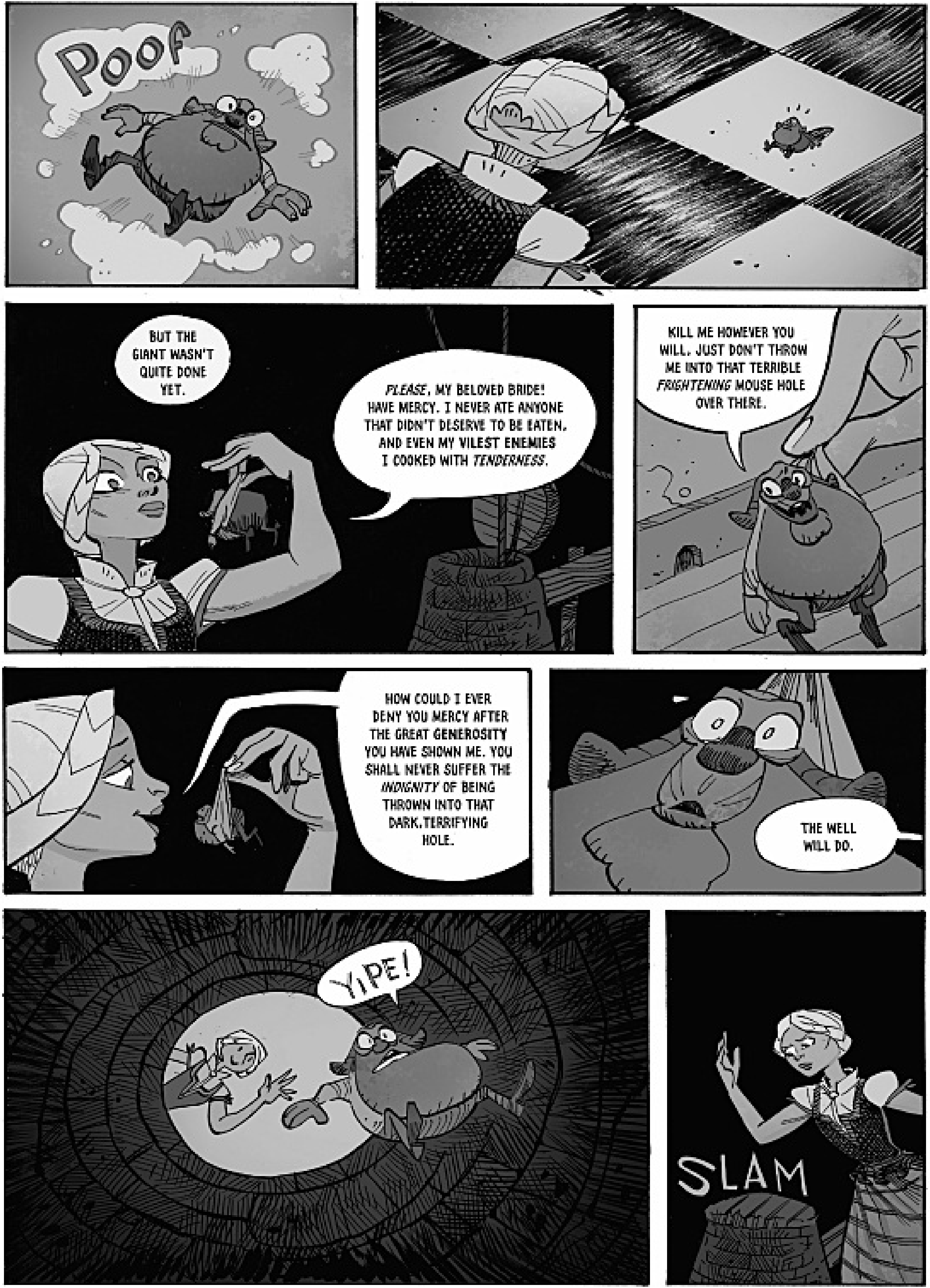

IT'S ONLY DUE TO YOUR KINDNESS THAT I STILL HOLD THIS SECRET. I PRAY THAT IT WILL SAVE YOU TOO. NOW I MUST GO BEFORE THE MAGIC OF THIS CASTLE TRAPS ME AS WELL.
FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP
AND WITH THAT, THE GOOSE MADE ITS ESCAPE, AND LEFT THE MAIDEN TO WONDER HOW SHE WOULD MAKE HERS.
THE NEXT MORNING, SHE AWOKE AND MADE HER WAY DOWN TO BREAKFAST, BUT WAS STOPPED BY THE GIANT.
MY DEAR BETROTHED, YOU KNOW OF MY WEALTH AND GREAT CASTLE, BUT I AM MORE THAN A RICH AND POWERFUL LORD. I ALSO HAVE *GREAT MAGIC*. I AM STRONGER THAN AN OX, I CAN HEAR LIKE A RABBIT AND HAVE EYES THAT CAN SEE KINGDOMS FAR ACROSS THE SEA OR THE TINIEST HAIR OF A FLEA.
ONE SUCH HAIR I LEFT ON THE LATCH OF THE CELLAR DOOR TO TEST TO SEE IF YOU WOULD KEEP MY LAW. AND TO MY SURPRISE, THIS MORNING...
IT WAS GONE.

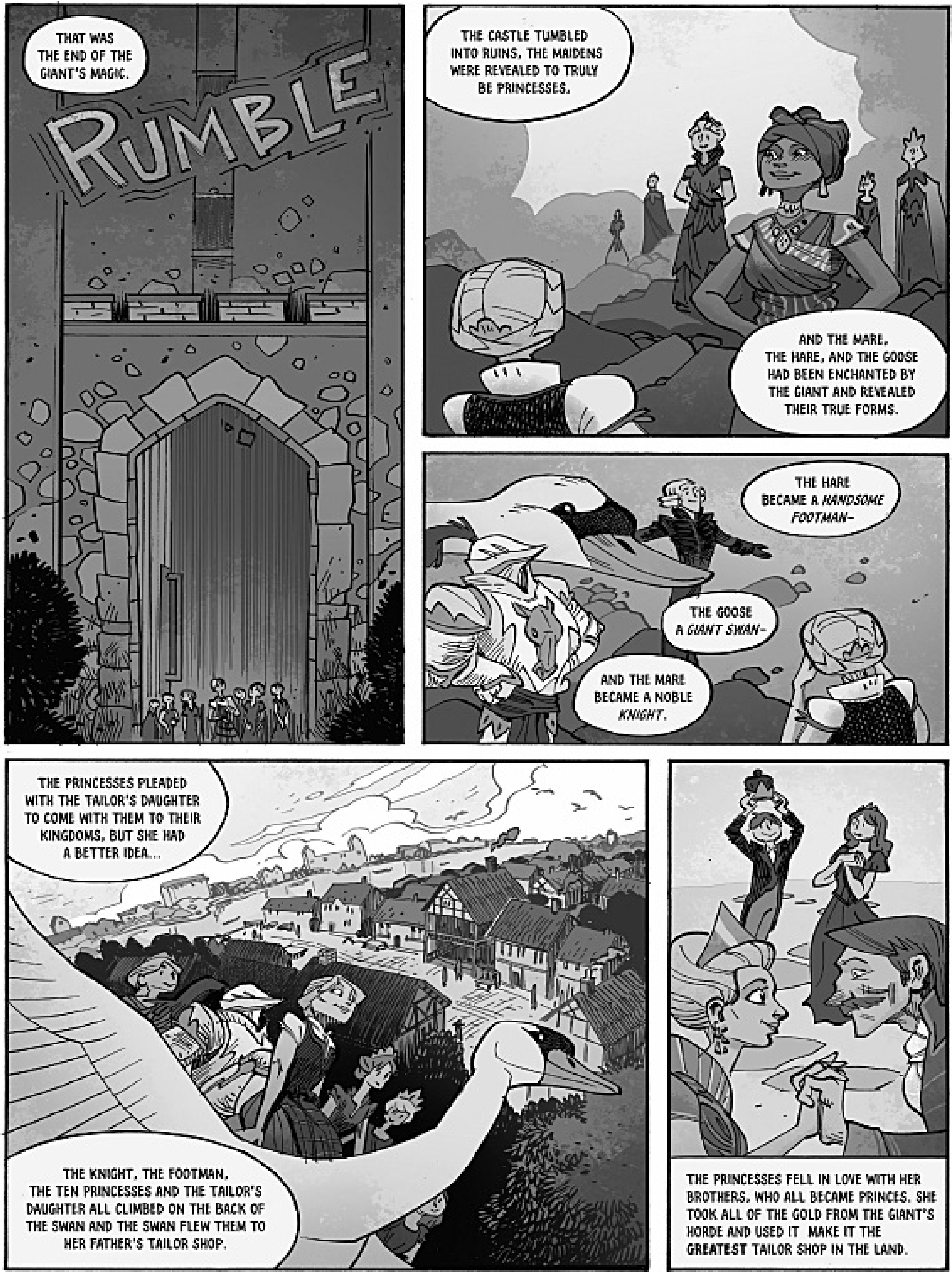

YOU HAVE FAILED MY TEST AND ALAS I CANNOT TAKE YOU AS MY BRIDE.
INSTEAD, I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY *SUPPER*.
BUT THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER WAS *CLEVER* AND NOT YET WITHOUT TRICKS.
MY *BELOVED* MASTER. I KNOW THAT I HAVE FAILED YOU WITH MY DISOBEDIENCE. I KNOW THAT I DESERVE NO MERCY. BUT I BEG OF YOU: KILL ME IN WHATEVER MANNER YOU CHOOSE, BUT DO NOT *SEVER* MY HEAD FROM MY BODY. I COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF BEING PUT TO MY FINAL RESTING PLACE WITH MY HEAD APART FROM MY BODY.
AND SO I SHALL DO *EXACTLY* THAT!
CRACK

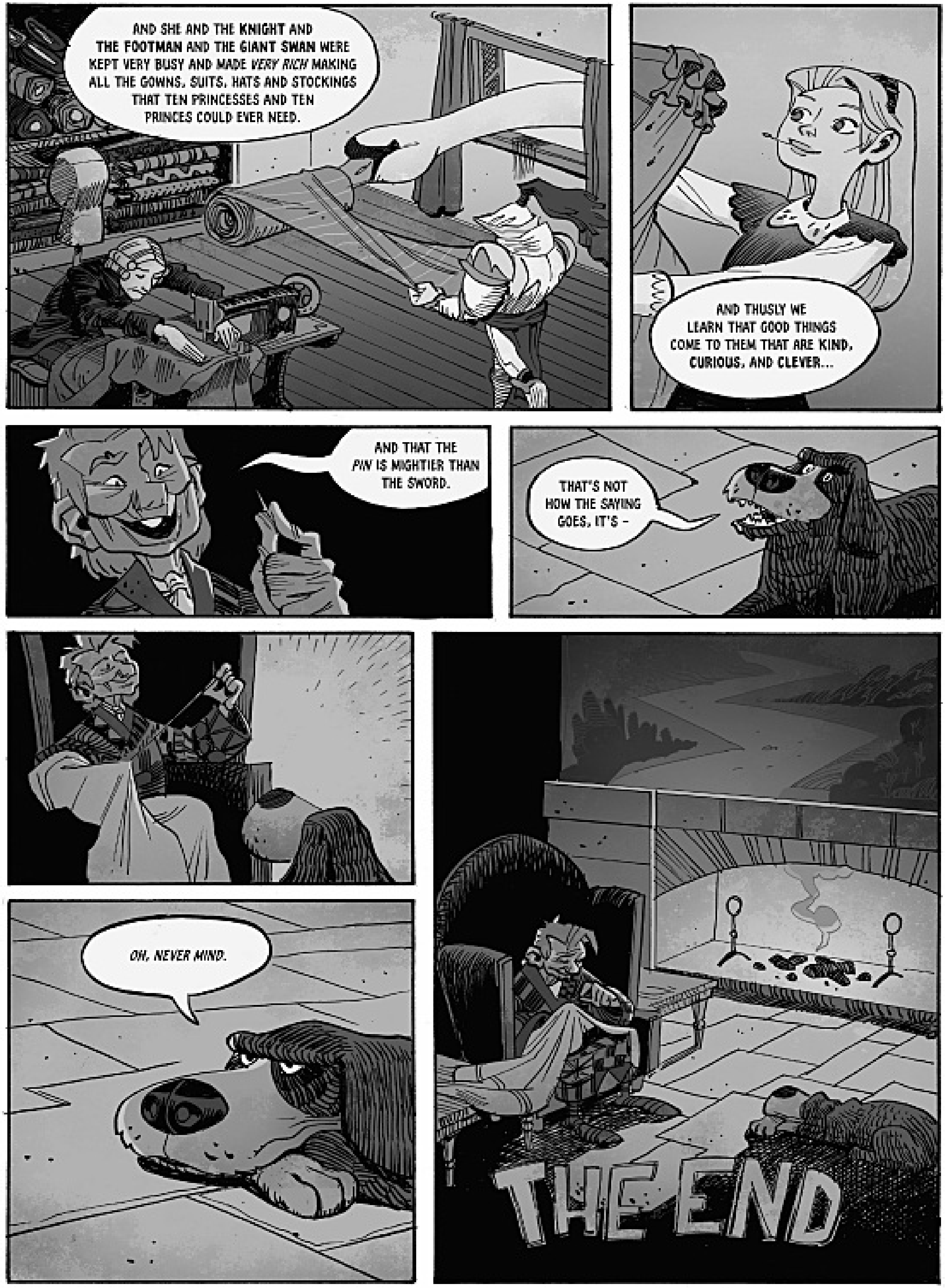

HIS KNIFE *SHATTERED*? BUT HOW? THIS PUT THE GIANT INTO SUCH A *RAGE* THAT HE TORE OFF HIS COAT AND FLUNG IT ACROSS THE ROOM.
RIIIIIPP
I *SEEM* TO ONLY *DISAPPOINT* YOU FURTHER AND FURTHER. NOW THAT I *SEE* YOUR ANGER, I FEEL I MUST ADMIT THAT THERE IS ONE MANNER OF DYING THAT TERRIFIES ME EVEN MORE THAN HAVING MY HEAD CUT OFF. I KNOW I DON'T DESERVE SUCH MERCY, BUT I BEG OF YOU, KILL ME AS CRUELLY AS YOU WILL, BUT DON'T *ROAST* ME ON THE CHARGER!


HOW IS IT THAT EVEN IN *DEATH* I CAN NOT SERVE YOU CORRECTLY? PLEASE, KILL ME *VICIOUSLY*, THAT I MIGHT AT LEAST DO ONE THING RIGHT. LISTEN NO MORE TO MY PLEAS FOR MERCY AND JUST SMASH ME TO BITS WITH WHATEVER SUITS YOU.
WHAT!


AND NOW THE GIANT WAS SO *FURIOUS*, SO *FUMING*, THAT HE WAS READY TO EAT HER WHOLE RIGHT THEN AND THERE.
WAIT! I HAVE ONE LAST REQUEST-
I HAVE BETRAYED YOU, BUT MY FATHER *NEVER* BROKE HIS WORD TO YOU. ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU RETURN THIS GIFT TO HIM AFTER YOU HAVE ME AS YOUR MEAL. IT IS THE MOST *PRECIOUS* THING I POSSES AND I WOULD GAIN GREAT COMFORT FROM KNOWING IT WAS RETURNED TO HIM UNDAMAGED.
I WILL SEE IT RETURNED TO HIM...
AND HE SNATCHED THE PIN CUSHION AND *CRUSHED* IT IN HIS HANDS.
LIKE THIS!
OUCH.


POOF
BUT THE GIANT WASN'T QUITE DONE YET.
PLEASE, MY BELOVED BRIDE! HAVE MERCY. I NEVER ATE ANYONE THAT DIDN'T DESERVE TO BE EATEN. AND EVEN MY VILEST ENEMIES I COOKED WITH *TENDERNESS*.
KILL ME HOWEVER YOU WILL. JUST DON'T THROW ME INTO THAT TERRIBLE *FRIGHTENING* MOUSE HOLE OVER THERE.
HOW COULD I EVER DENY YOU MERCY AFTER THE GREAT GENEROSITY YOU HAVE SHOWN ME. YOU SHALL NEVER SUFFER THE *INDIGNITY* OF BEING THROWN INTO THAT DARK.TERRIFYING HOLE.
THE WELL WILL DO.
YIPE!
SLAM


THAT WAS THE END OF THE GIANT'S MAGIC.
RUMBLE
THE CASTLE TUMBLED INTO RUINS. THE MAIDENS WERE REVEALED TO TRULY BE PRINCESSES.
AND THE MARE, THE HARE, AND THE GOOSE HAD BEEN ENCHANTED BY THE GIANT AND REVEALED THEIR TRUE FORMS.
THE HARE BECAME A HANDSOME FOOTMAN-
THE GOOSE A GIANT SWAN-
AND THE MARE BECAME A NOBLE KNIGHT.
THE PRINCESSES PLEADED WITH THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER TO COME WITH THEM TO THEIR KINGDOMS, BUT SHE HAD A BETTER IDEA...
THE KNIGHT, THE FOOTMAN, THE TEN PRINCESSES AND THE TAILOR'S DAUGHTER ALL CLIMBED ON THE BACK OF THE SWAN AND THE SWAN FLEW THEM TO HER FATHER'S TAILOR SHOP.
THE PRINCESSES FELL IN LOVE WITH HER BROTHERS, WHO ALL BECAME PRINCES. SHE TOOK ALL OF THE GOLD FROM THE GIANT'S HORDE AND USED IT MAKE IT THE GREATEST TAILOR SHOP IN THE LAND.


AND SHE AND THE KNIGHT AND THE FOOTMAN AND THE GIANT SWAN WERE KEPT VERY BUSY AND MADE *VERY RICH* MAKING ALL THE GOWNS, SUITS, HATS AND STOCKINGS THAT TEN PRINCESSES AND TEN PRINCES COULD EVER NEED.
AND THUSLY WE LEARN THAT GOOD THINGS COME TO THEM THAT ARE KIND, CURIOUS, AND CLEVER...
AND THAT THE *PIN* IS MIGHTIER THAN THE *SWORD*.
THAT'S NOT HOW THE SAYING GOES, IT'S –
OH, NEVER MIND.
THE END

TALE THREE COVER

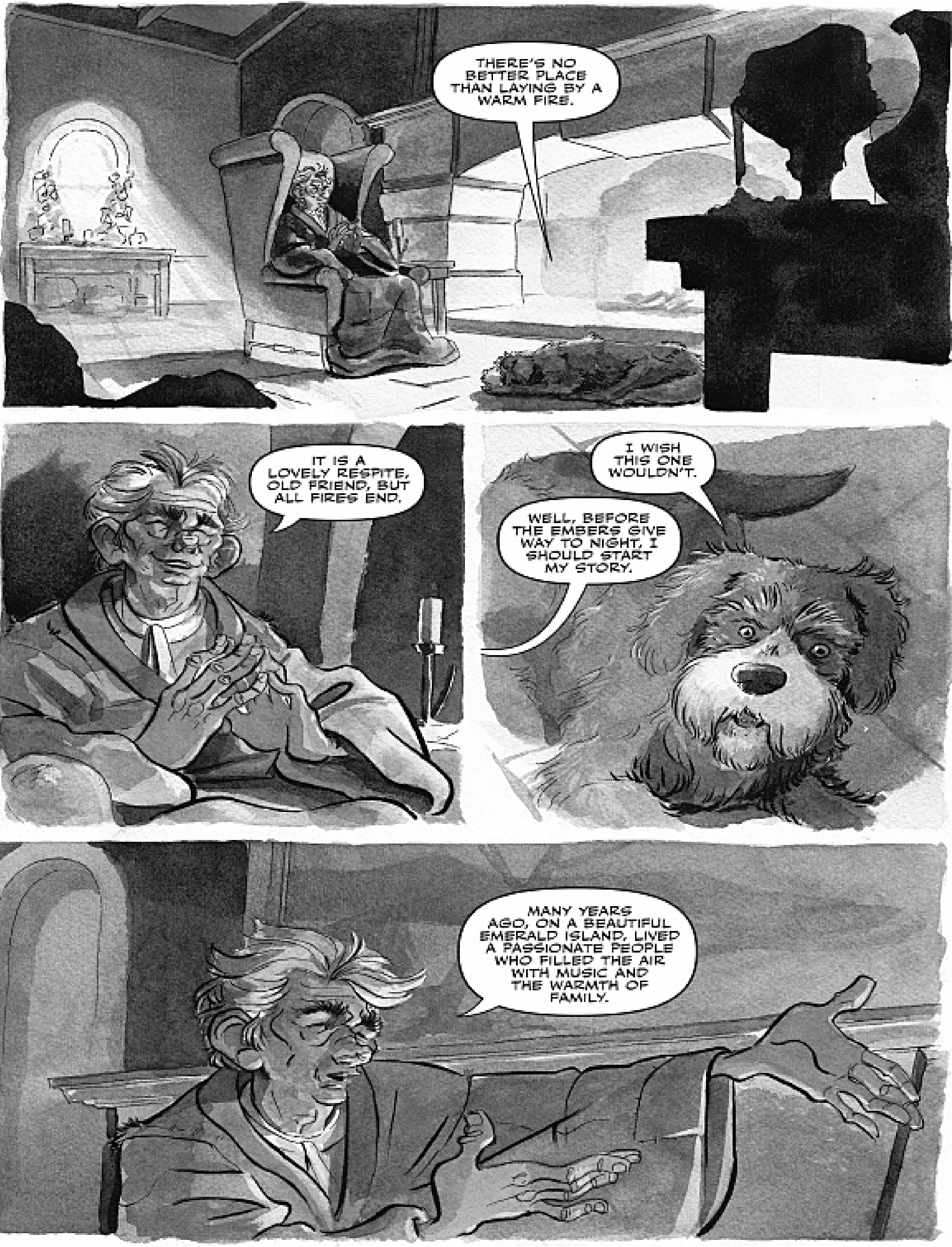
JARED CULLUM

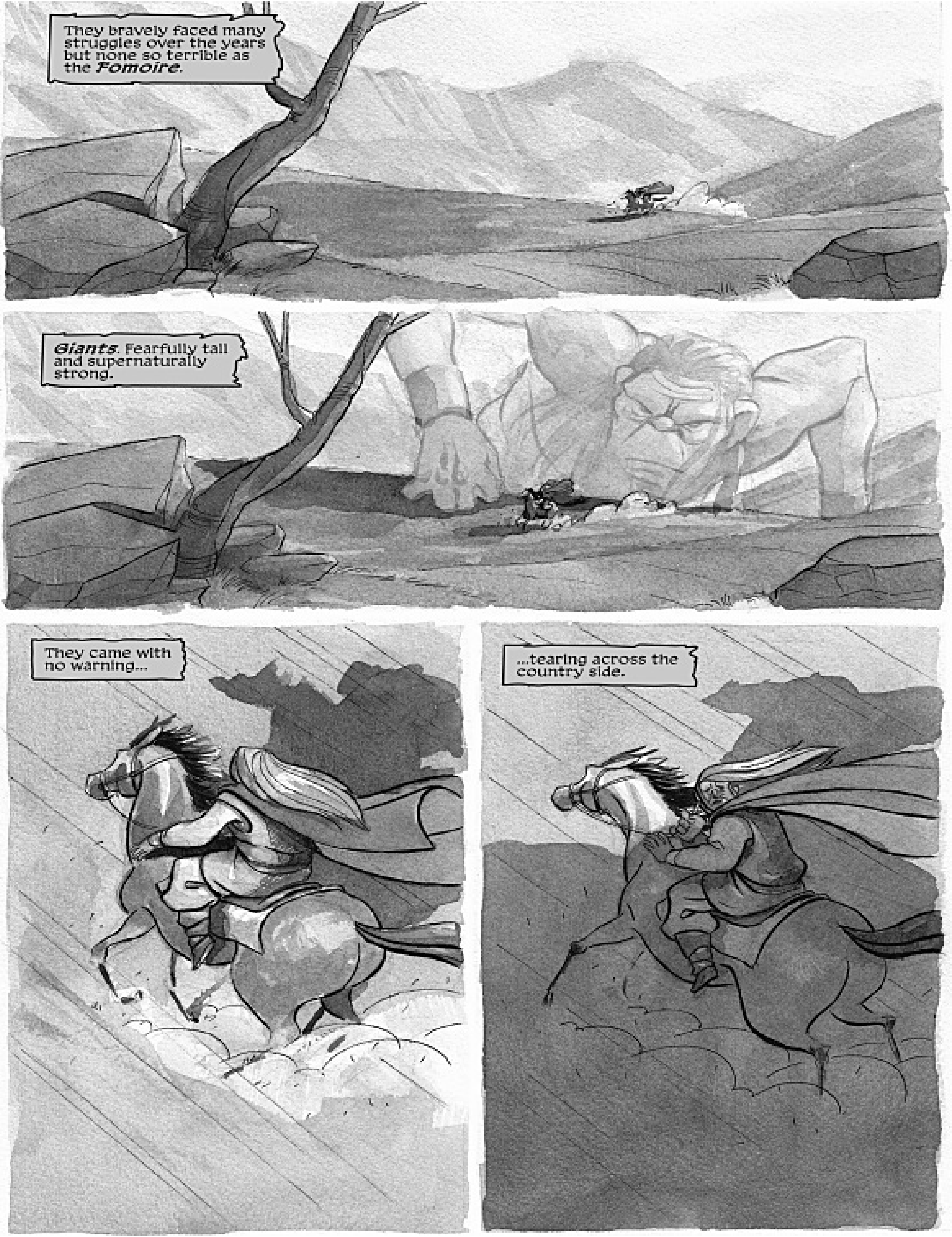
PRU and the FOMORIAN GIANTS

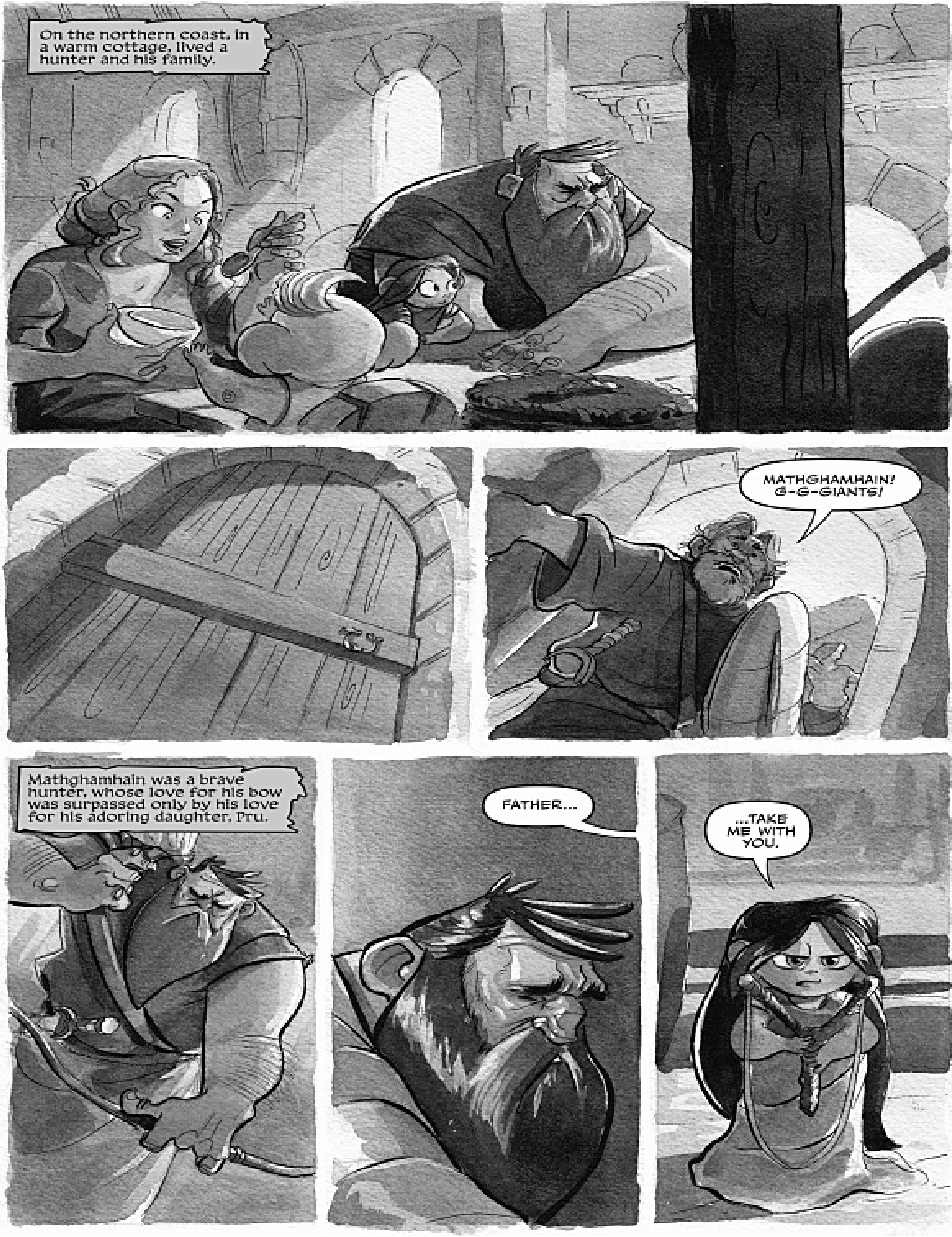
When I was contacted about working on a *Storyteller* comic I immediately went to several local libraries and carried out a shopping cart full of books on myths and mythology. Irish culture is rich with stories of giants so I was drawn to it immediately and read book after book full of whimsical stories. I enjoyed a lot of the elements from different Irish mythological stories like the Puka and the rise and fall of the Fomorian giants. I began to write out how I could sew some of these elements into a story concept.

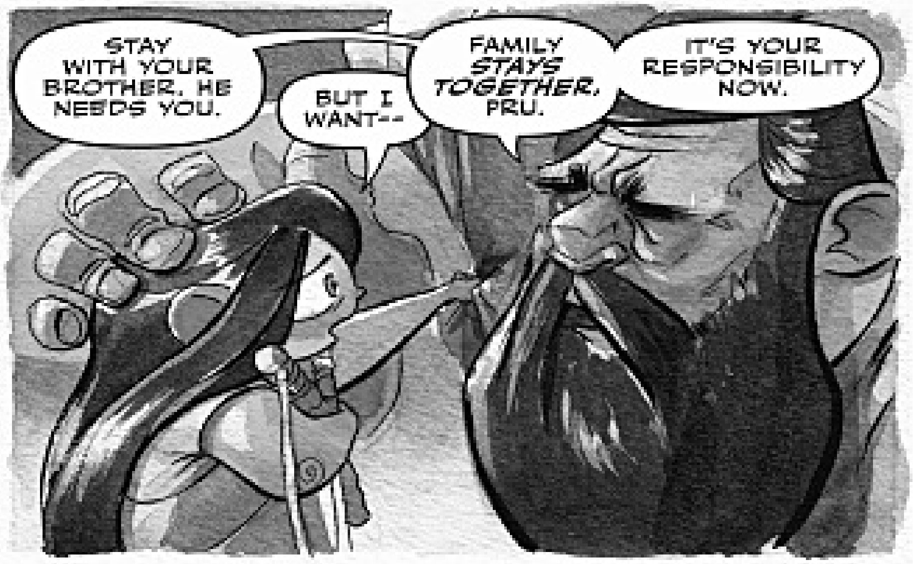
The story was initially a metaphor about the struggle and acceptance of crossing the threshold and entering the wilderness of becoming a new parent, but when I thought about a world full of darkness and giants I couldn't help but go back to a constant rumination of mine. Every day I watch my precocious two-year-old son grapple with his limitations and a growing desire for independence. Then I look at our world that is full of wolves, giants, and any manner of darkness that my wife and I cannot protect him from forever. Pru, based on my wife's personality, embodies the spirit of our desire to protect him. It became about the juxtaposition of pride and pain that comes from watching him grow up too fast.

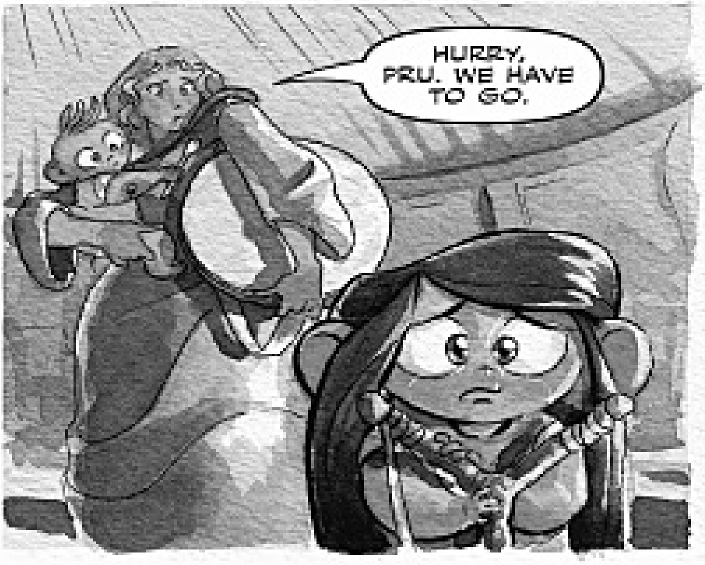
– Jared Cullum

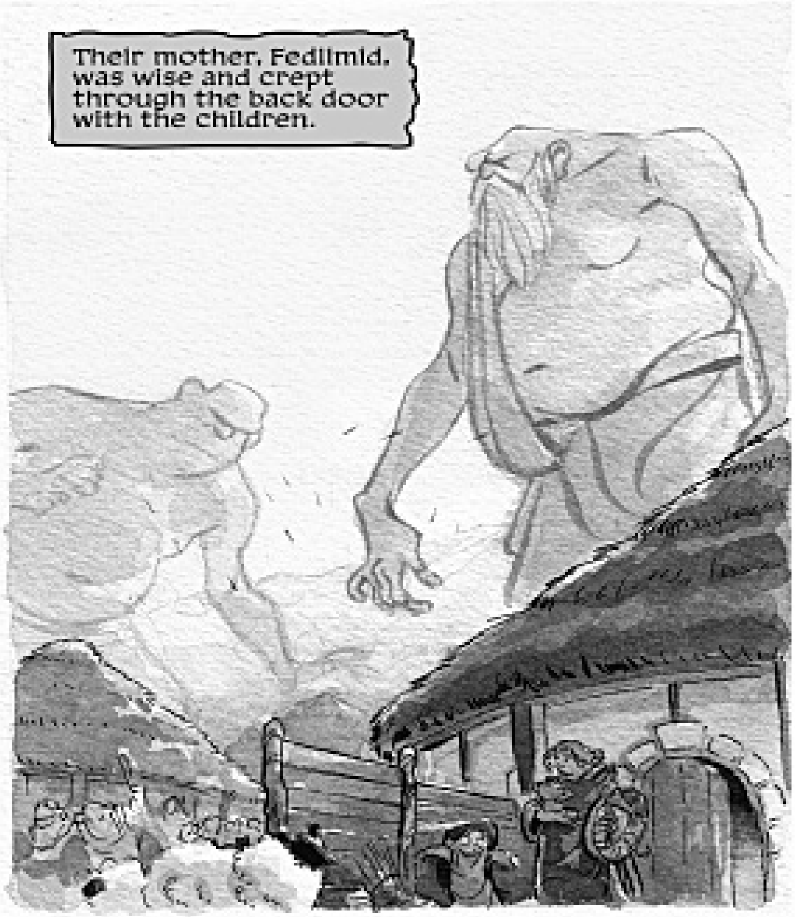

THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE THAN LAYING BY A WARM FIRE.
IT IS A LOVELY RESPITE, OLD FRIEND, BUT ALL FIRES END.
I WISH THIS ONE WOULDN'T.
WELL, BEFORE THE EMBERS GIVE WAY TO NIGHT, I SHOULD START MY STORY.
MANY YEARS AGO, ON A BEAUTIFUL EMERALD ISLAND, LIVED A PASSIONATE PEOPLE WHO FILLED THE AIR WITH MUSIC AND THE WARMTH OF FAMILY.

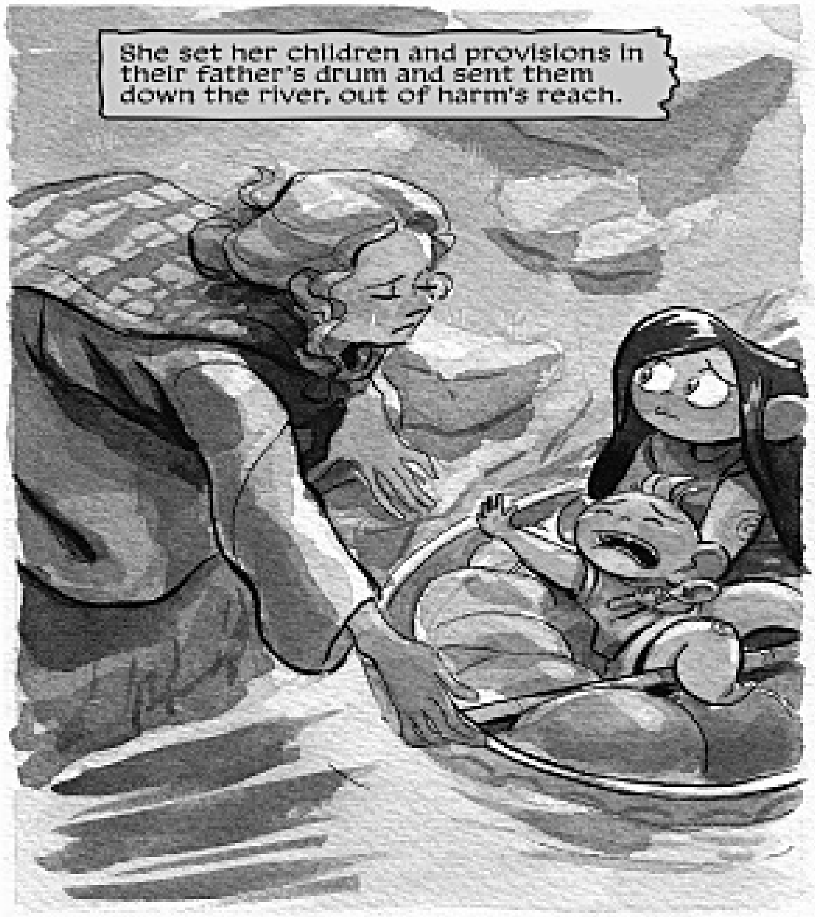

They bravely faced many struggles over the years but none so terrible as the *Fomoire*.
Giants. Fearfully tall and supernaturally strong.
They came with no warning...
...tearing across the country side.

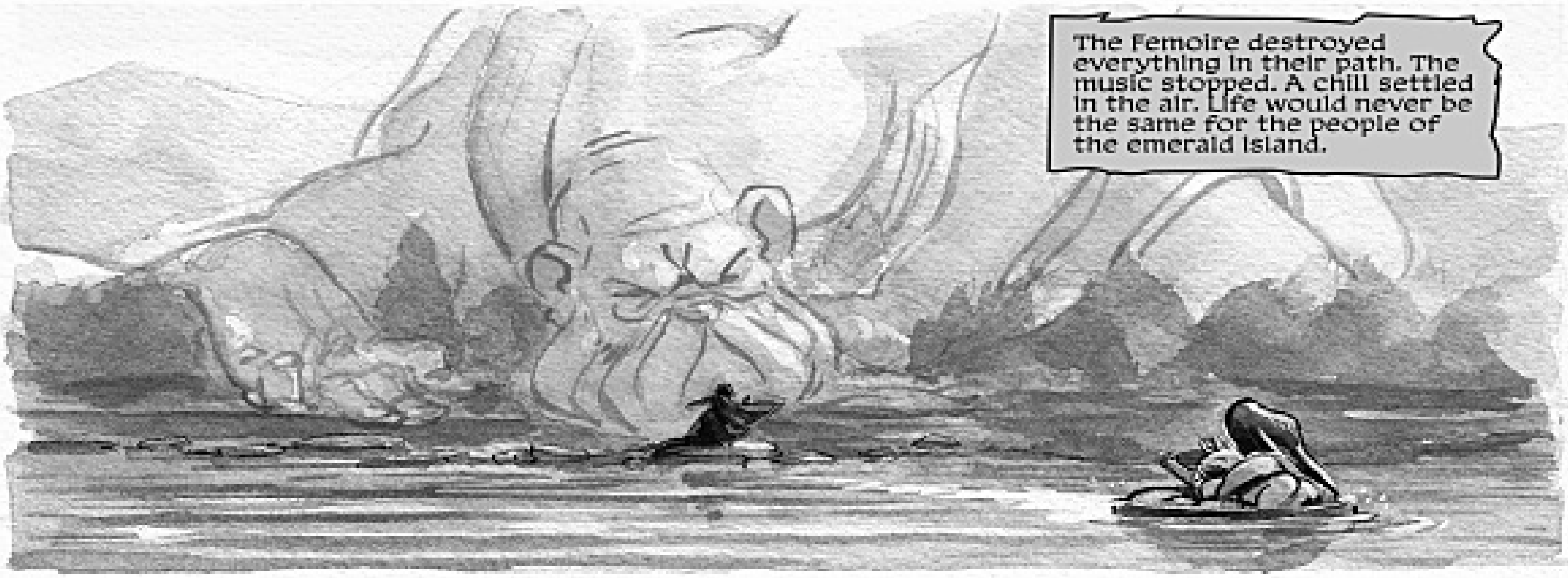

On the northern coast, in a warm cottage, lived a hunter and his family.
MATHGHAMHAIN! G-G-GIANTS!
Mathghamhain was a brave hunter, whose love for his bow was surpassed only by his love for his adoring daughter, Pru.
FATHER...
...TAKE ME WITH YOU.

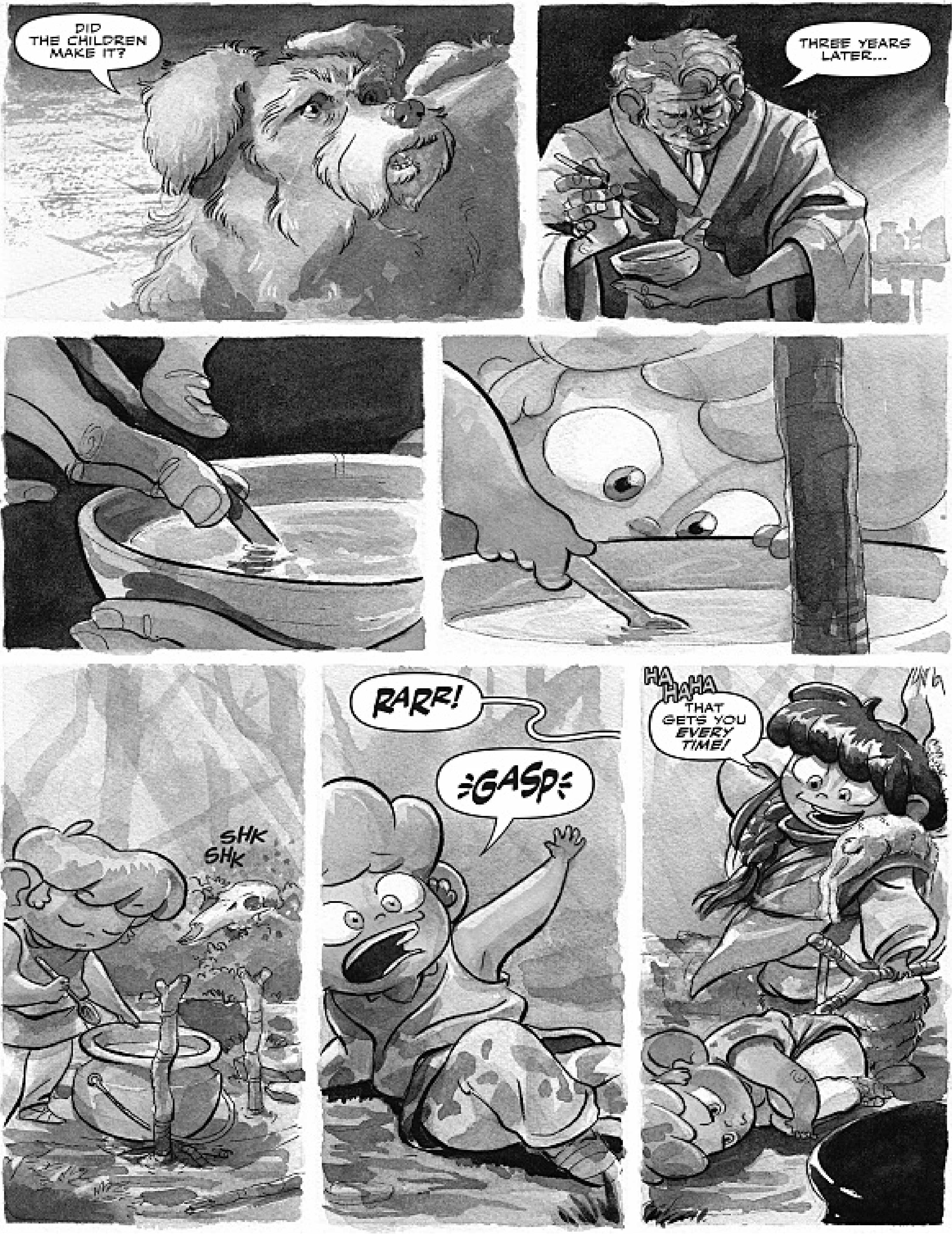

STAY WITH YOUR BROTHER. HE NEEDS YOU.
BUT I WANT--
FAMILY *STAYS TOGETHER*, PRU.
IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY NOW.

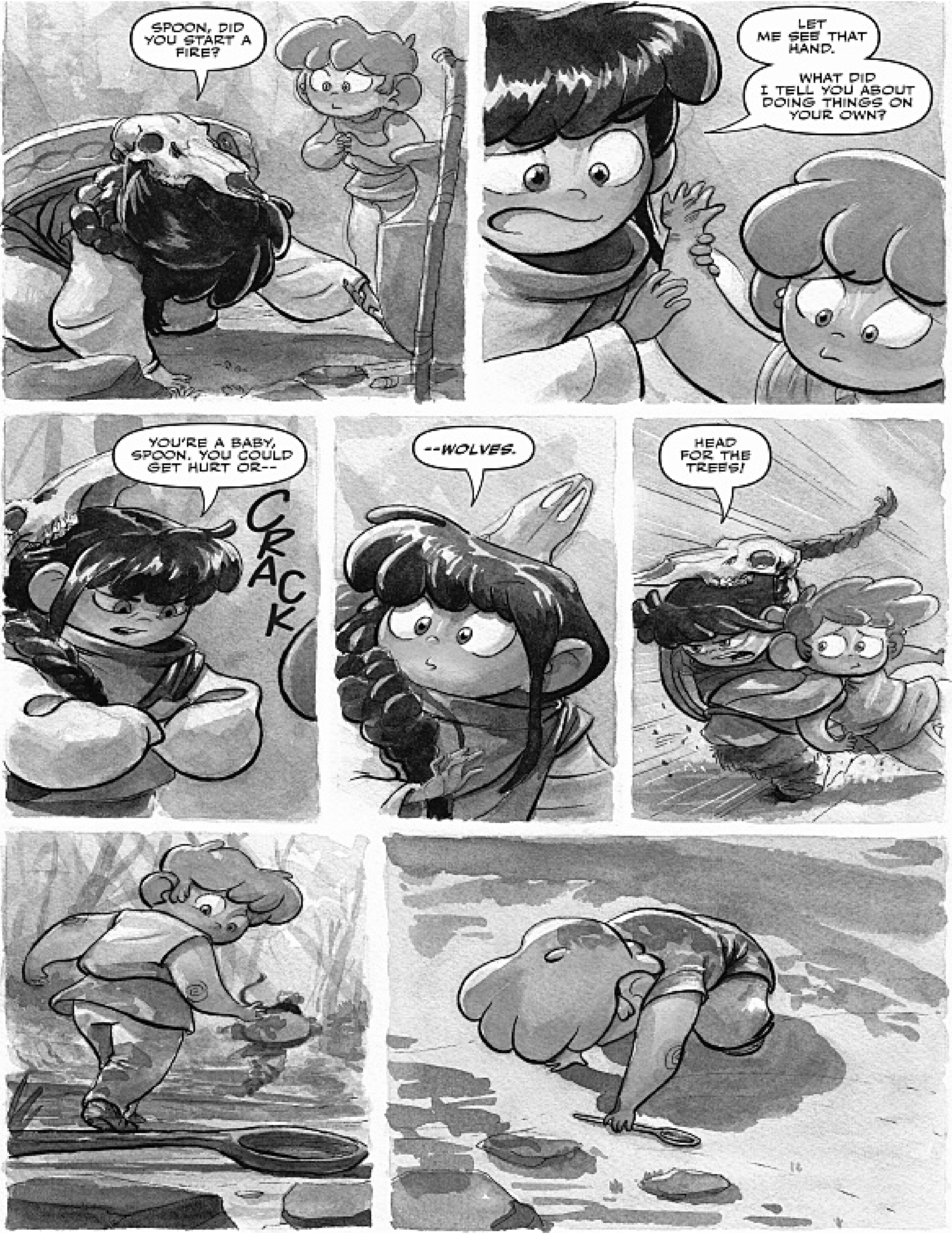

HURRY, PRU. WE HAVE TO GO.

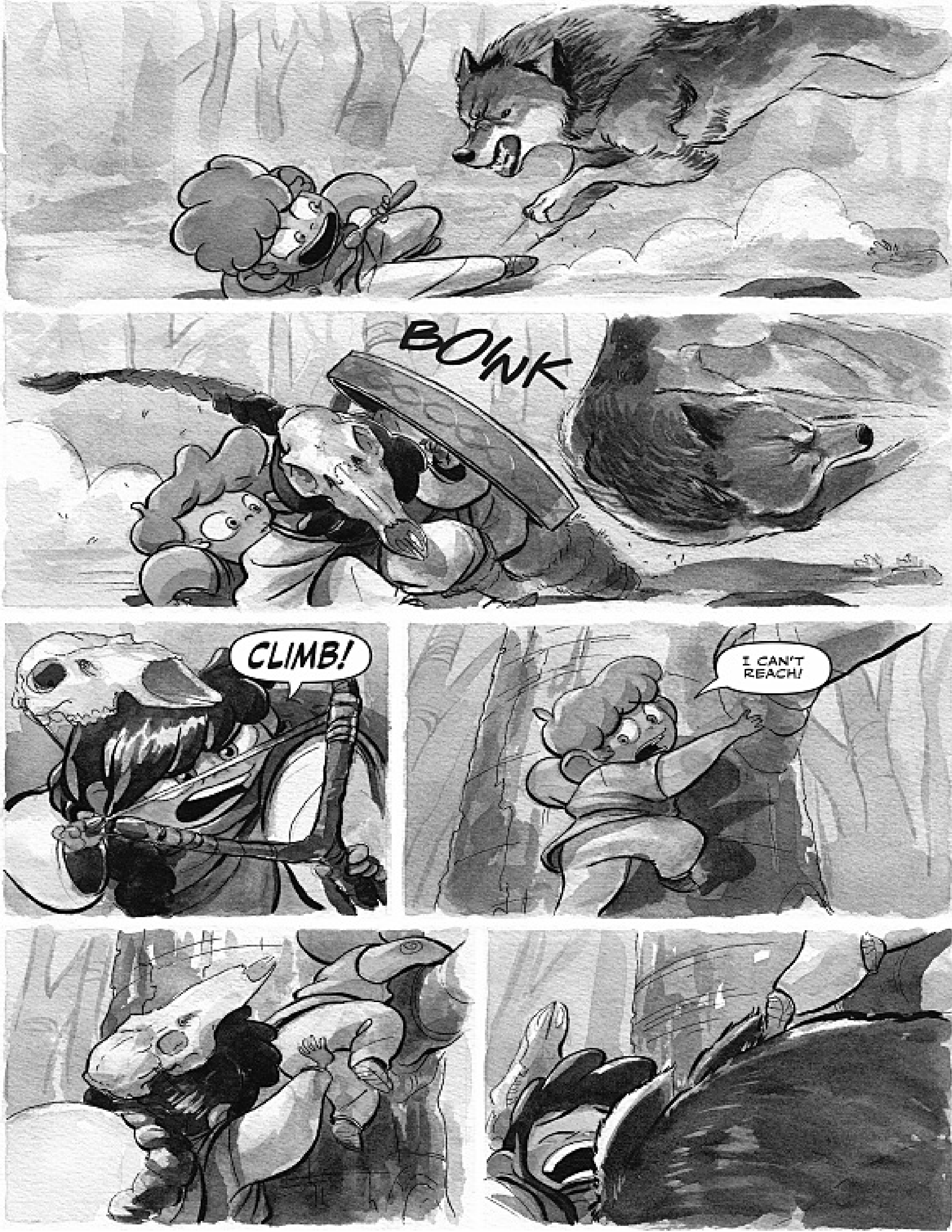

Their mother, Fedlimid, was wise and crept through the back door with the children.

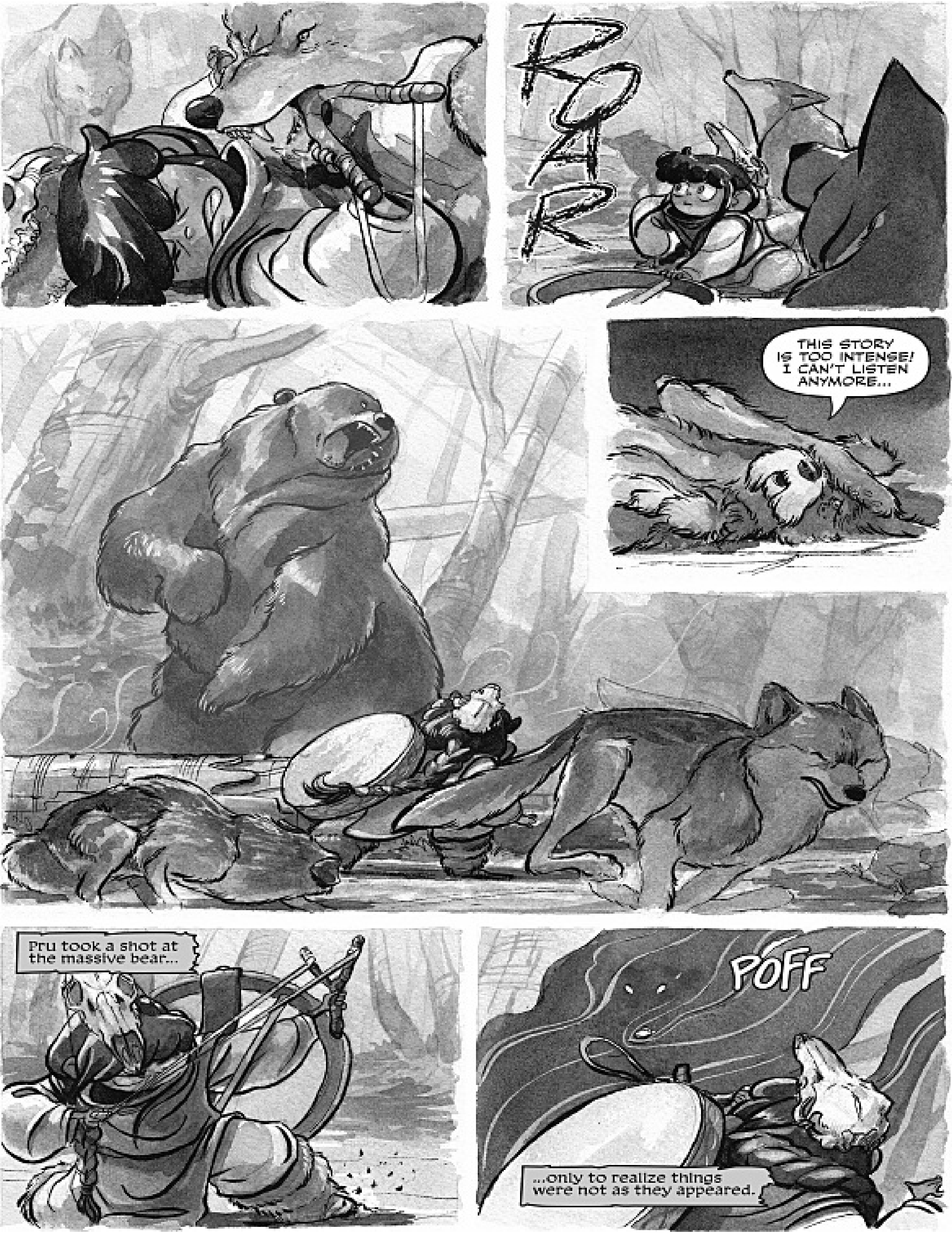

She set her children and provisions in their father's drum and sent them down the river, out of harm's reach.

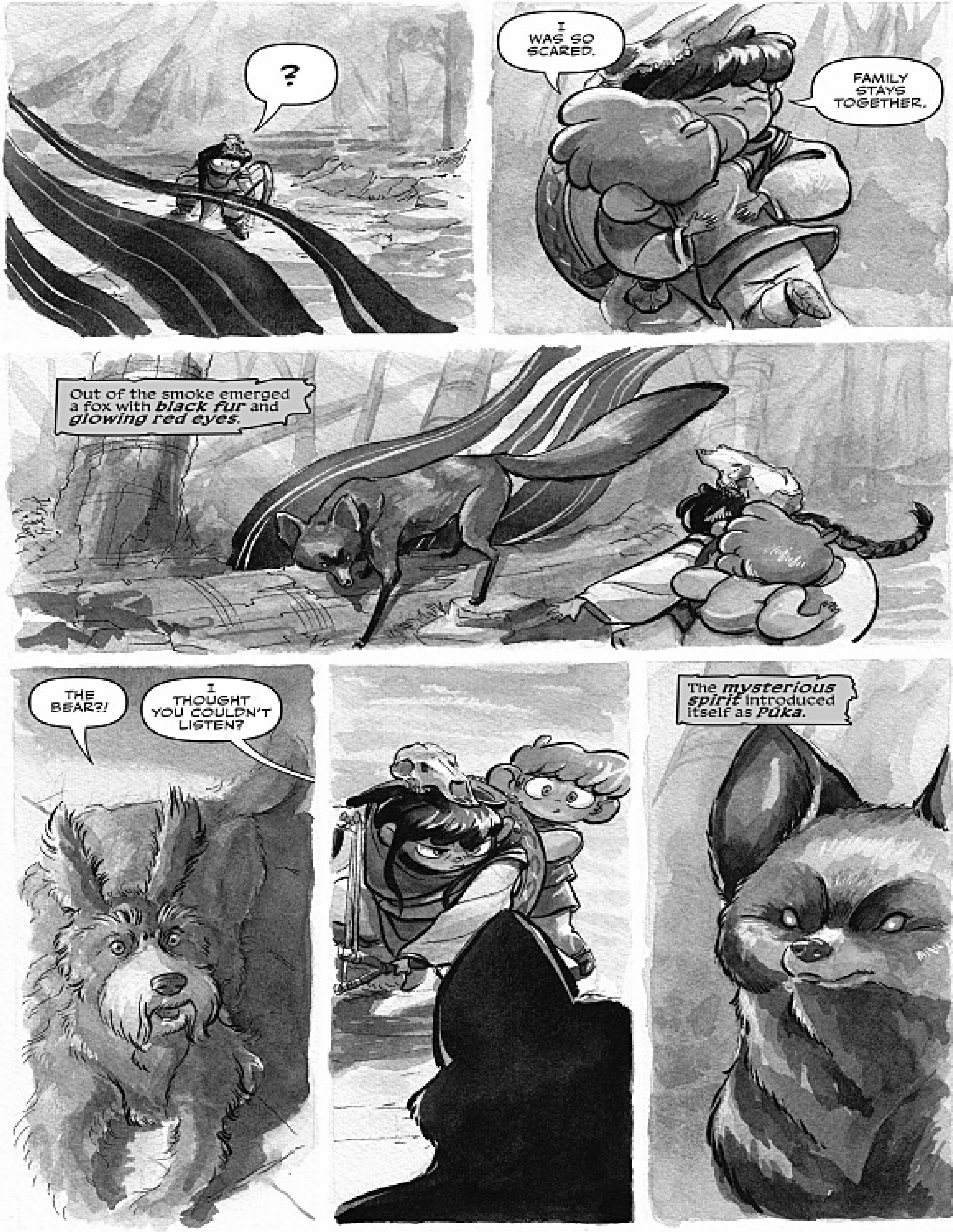

The Femoire destroyed everything in their path. The music stopped. A chill settled in the air. Life would never be the same for the people of the emerald island.

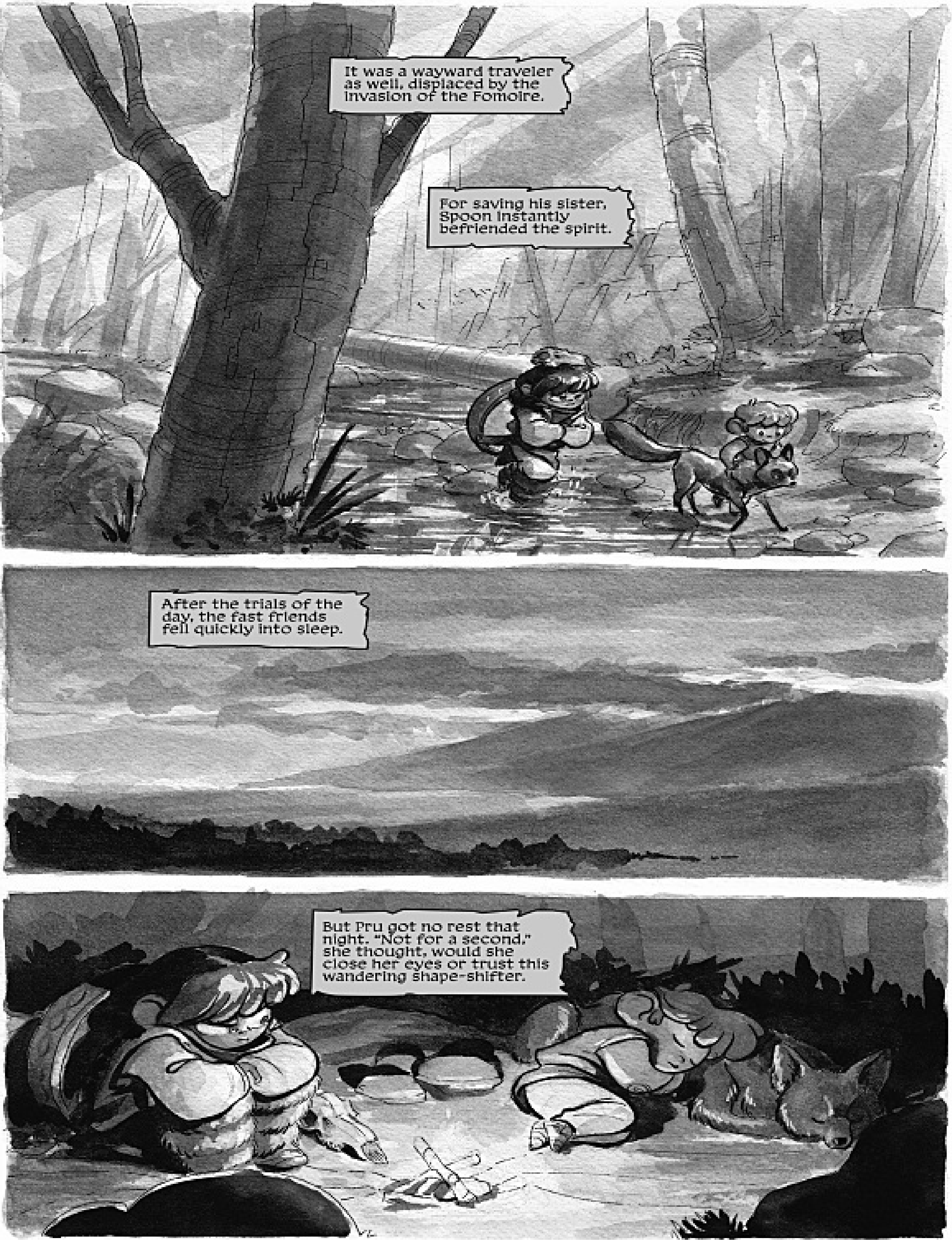

DID THE CHILDREN MAKE IT?
THREE YEARS LATER...
SHK SHK
RARR!
GASP
HA HAHA
THAT GETS YOU *EVERY TIME!*

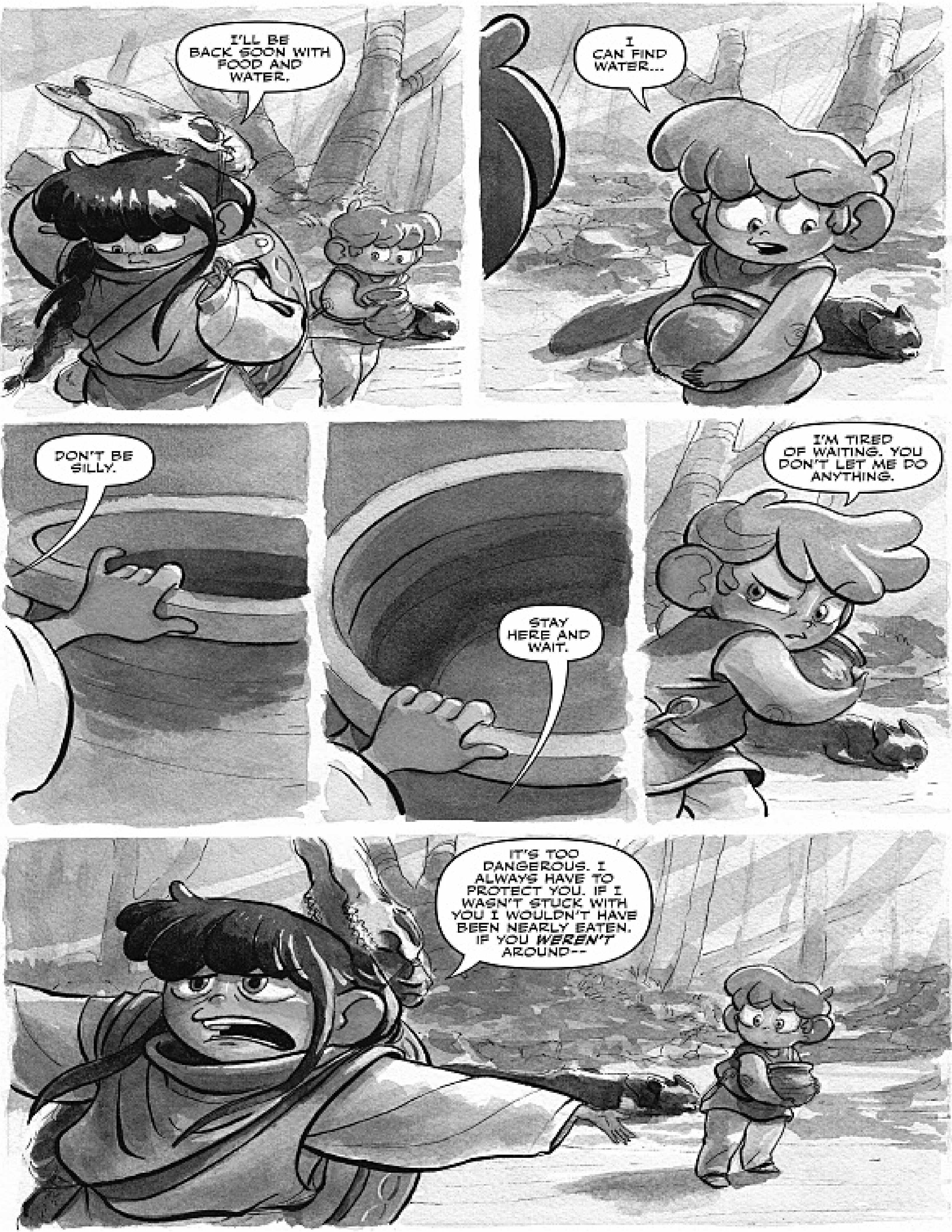

SPOON, DID YOU START A FIRE?
LET ME SEE THAT HAND.
WHAT DID I TELL YOU ABOUT DOING THINGS ON YOUR OWN?
YOU'RE A BABY, SPOON. YOU COULD GET HURT OR--
CRACK
--*WOLVES.*
HEAD FOR THE TREES!

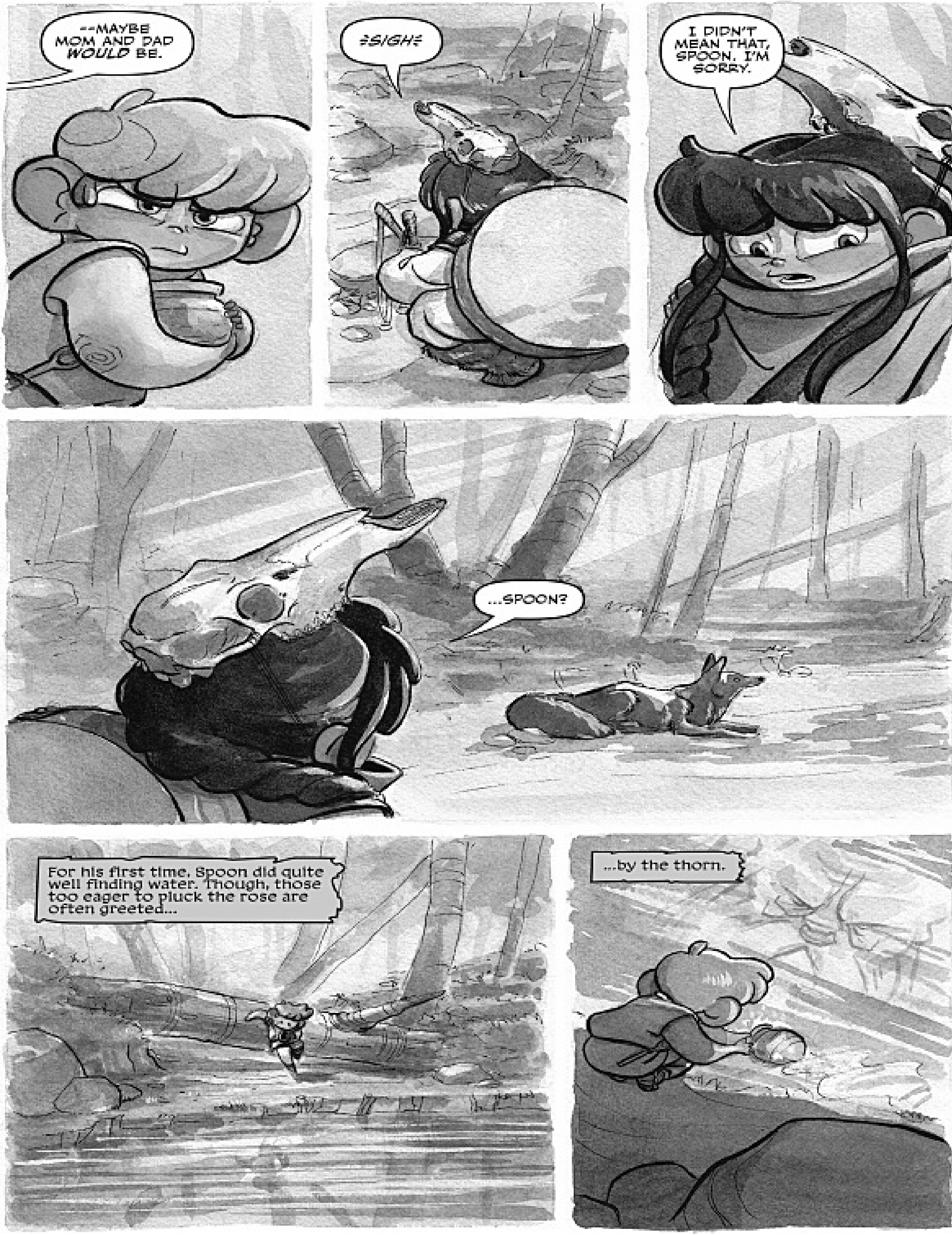

BOINK
CLIMB!
I CAN'T REACH!

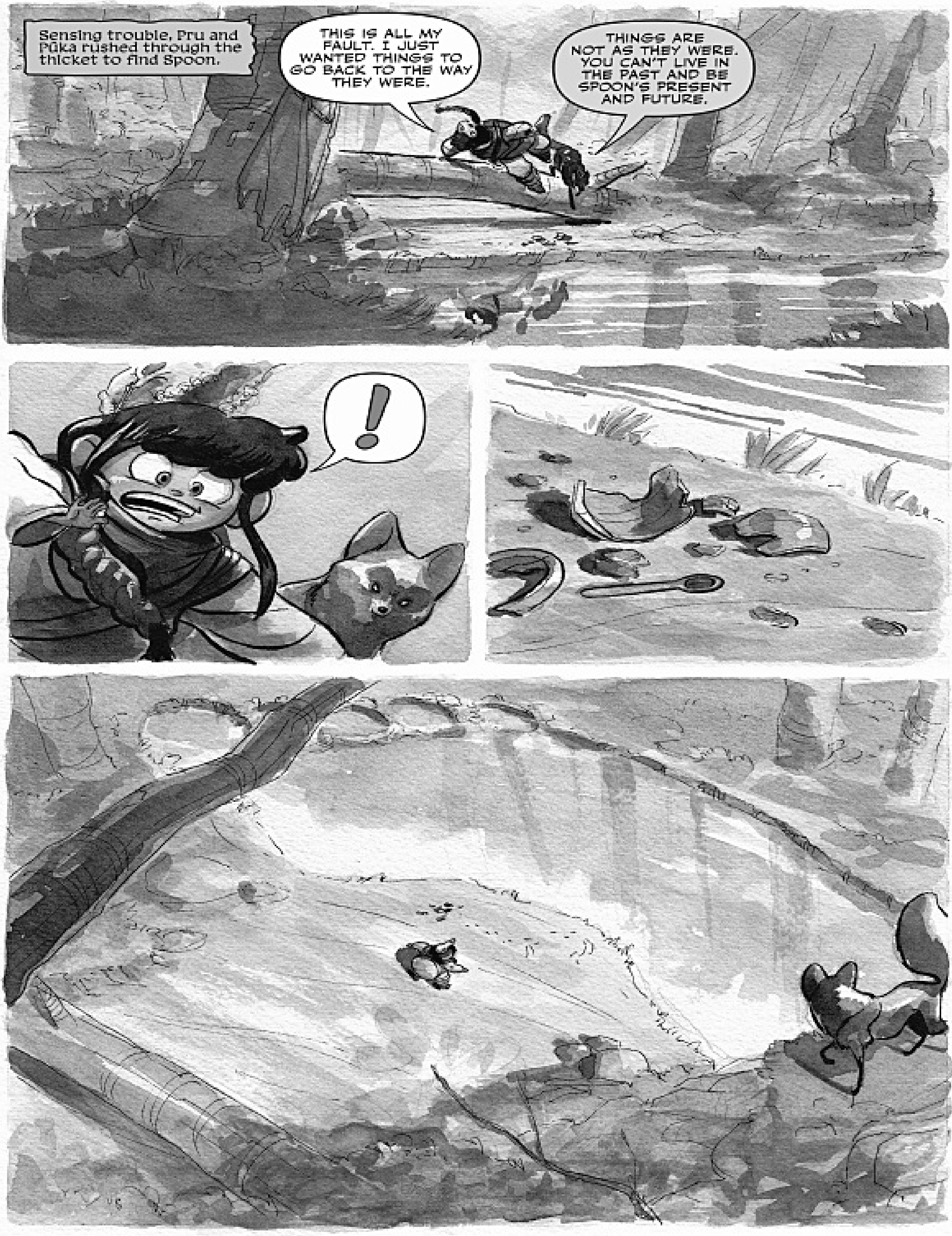

ROAR
THIS STORY IS TOO INTENSE! I CAN'T LISTEN ANYMORE...
Pru took a shot at the massive bear...
POFF
...only to realize things were not as they appeared.

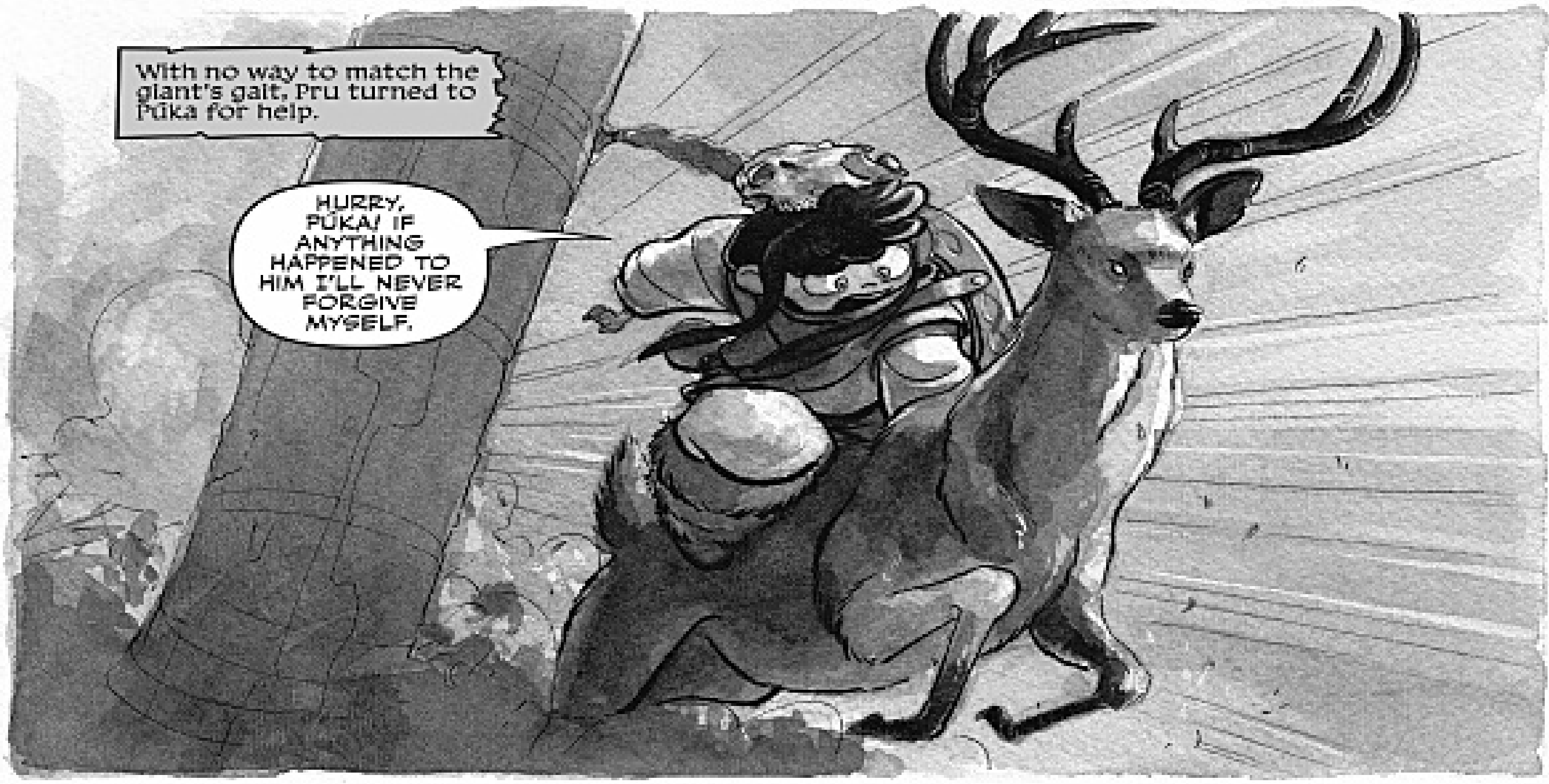

?
I WAS SO SCARED.
FAMILY STAYS TOGETHER.
Out of the smoke emerged a fox with *black fur* and *glowing red eyes*.
THE BEAR?!
I THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T LISTEN?
The *mysterious spirit* introduced itself as *Púka*.

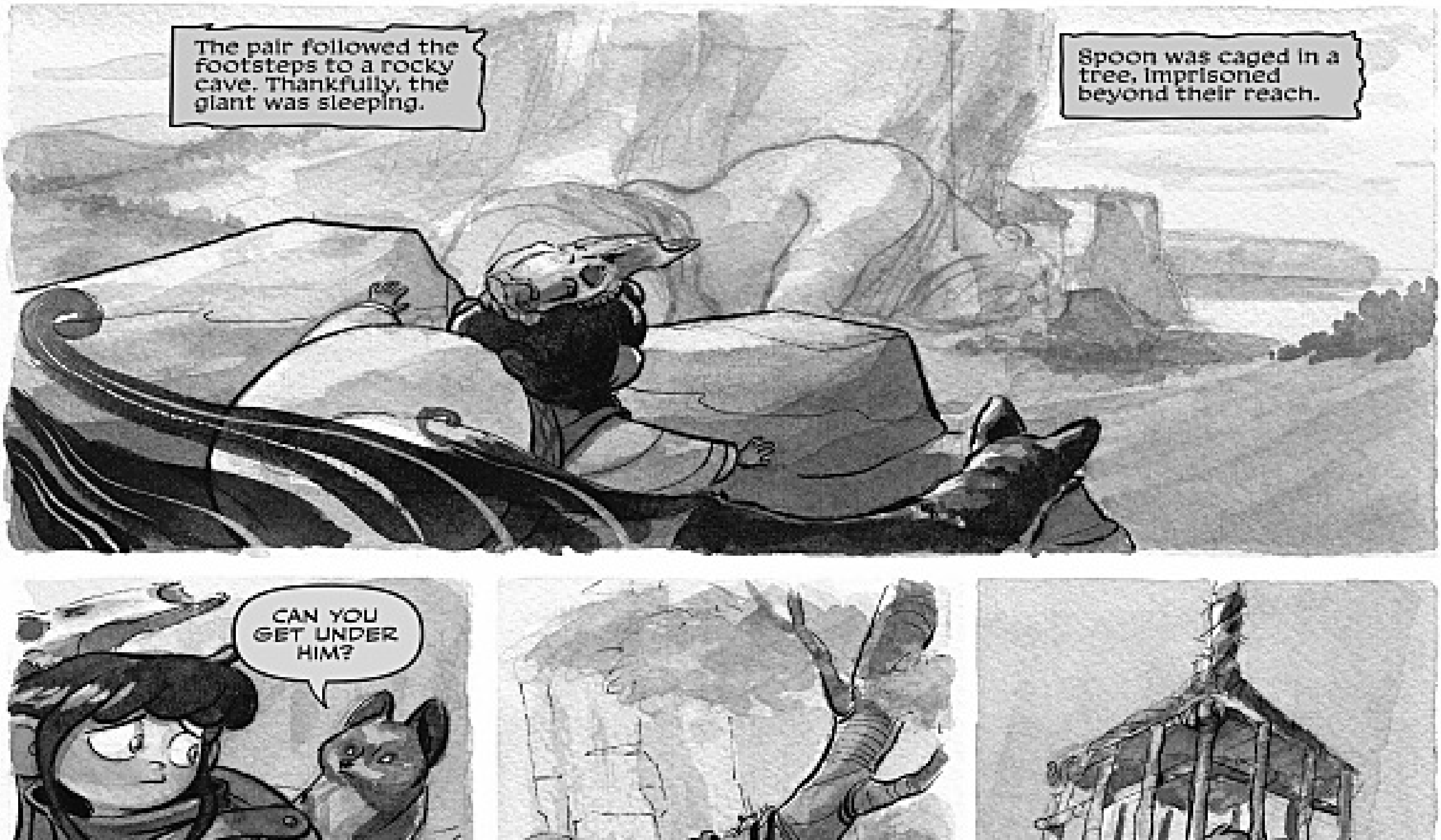

It was a wayward traveler as well, displaced by the invasion of the Fomoire.
For saving his sister, Spoon instantly befriended the spirit.
After the trials of the day, the fast friends fell quickly into sleep.
But Pru got no rest that night. "Not for a second," she thought, would she close her eyes or trust this wandering shape-shifter.

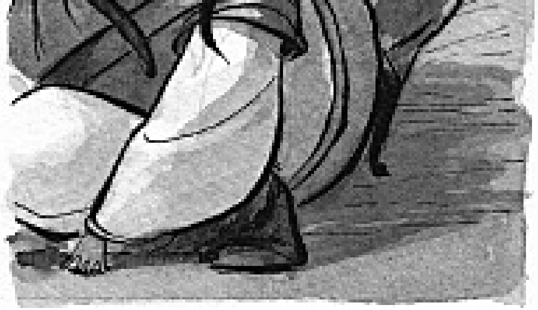

I'LL BE BACK SOON WITH FOOD AND WATER.
I CAN FIND WATER...
DON'T BE SILLY.
STAY HERE AND WAIT.
I'M TIRED OF WAITING. YOU DON'T LET ME DO ANYTHING.
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. I ALWAYS HAVE TO PROTECT YOU. IF I WASN'T STUCK WITH YOU I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN NEARLY EATEN. IF YOU ***WEREN'T*** AROUND--

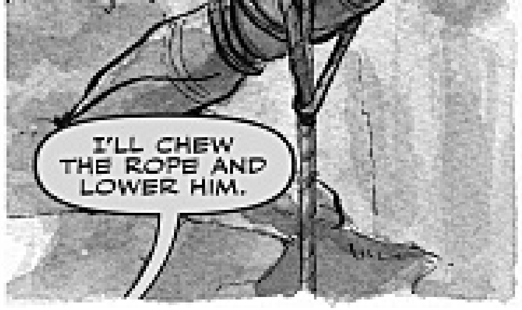

--MAYBE MOM AND DAD *WOULD* BE.
⪢SIGH⪡
I DIDN'T MEAN THAT, SPOON. I'M SORRY.
...SPOON?
For his first time, Spoon did quite well finding water. Though, those too eager to pluck the rose are often greeted...
...by the thorn.

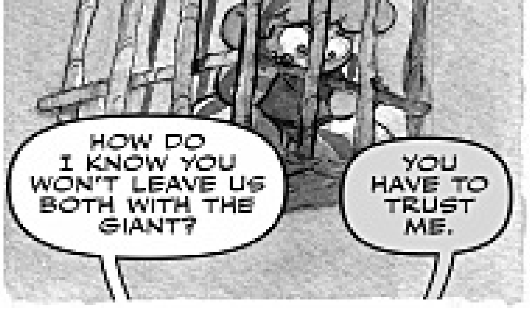

Sensing trouble, Pru and Pūka rushed through the thicket to find Spoon.
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. I JUST WANTED THINGS TO GO BACK TO THE WAY THEY WERE.
THINGS ARE NOT AS THEY WERE. YOU CAN'T LIVE IN THE PAST AND BE SPOON'S PRESENT AND FUTURE.
!

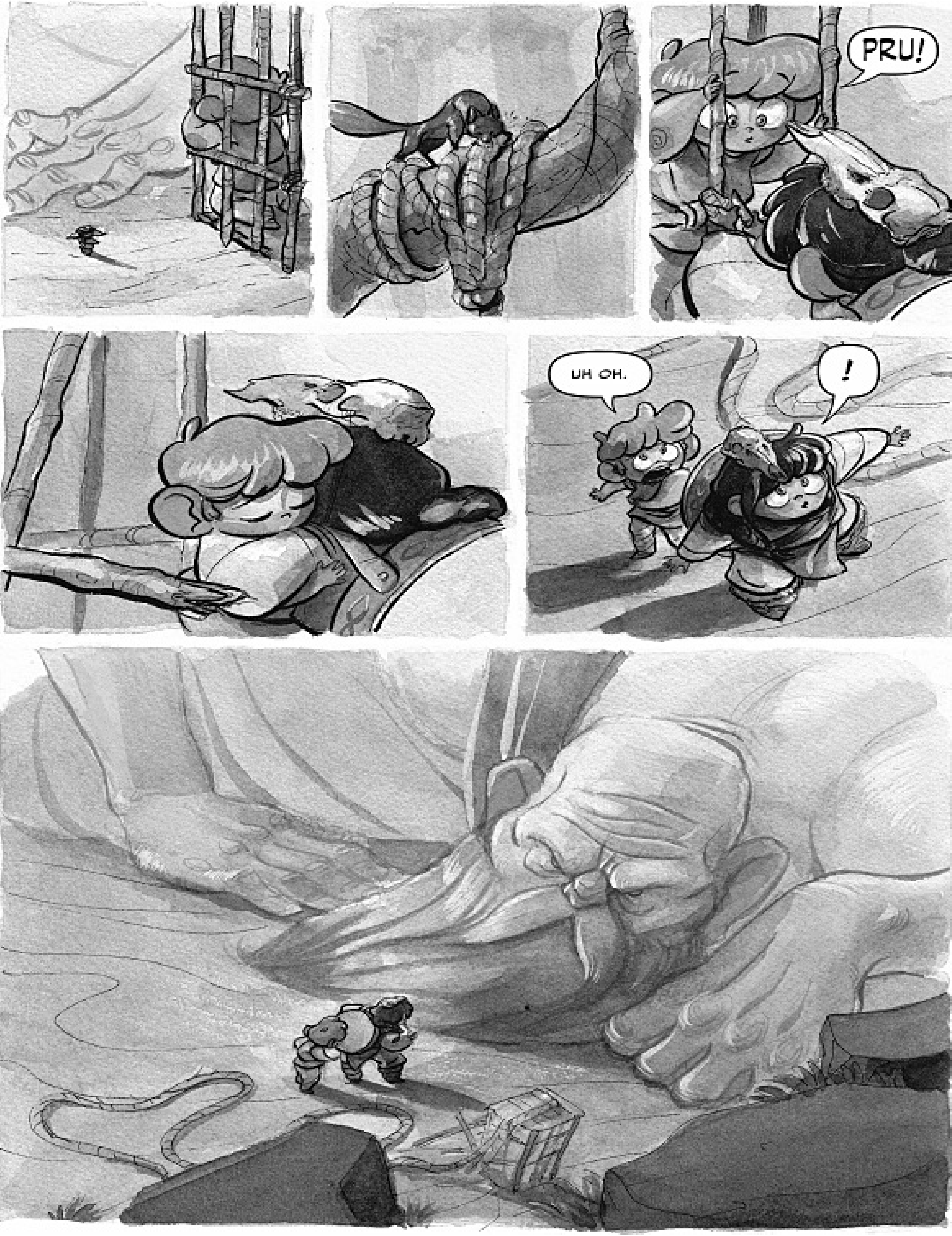

With no way to match the giant's gait, Pru turned to Pūka for help.
HURRY, PŪKA! IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF.

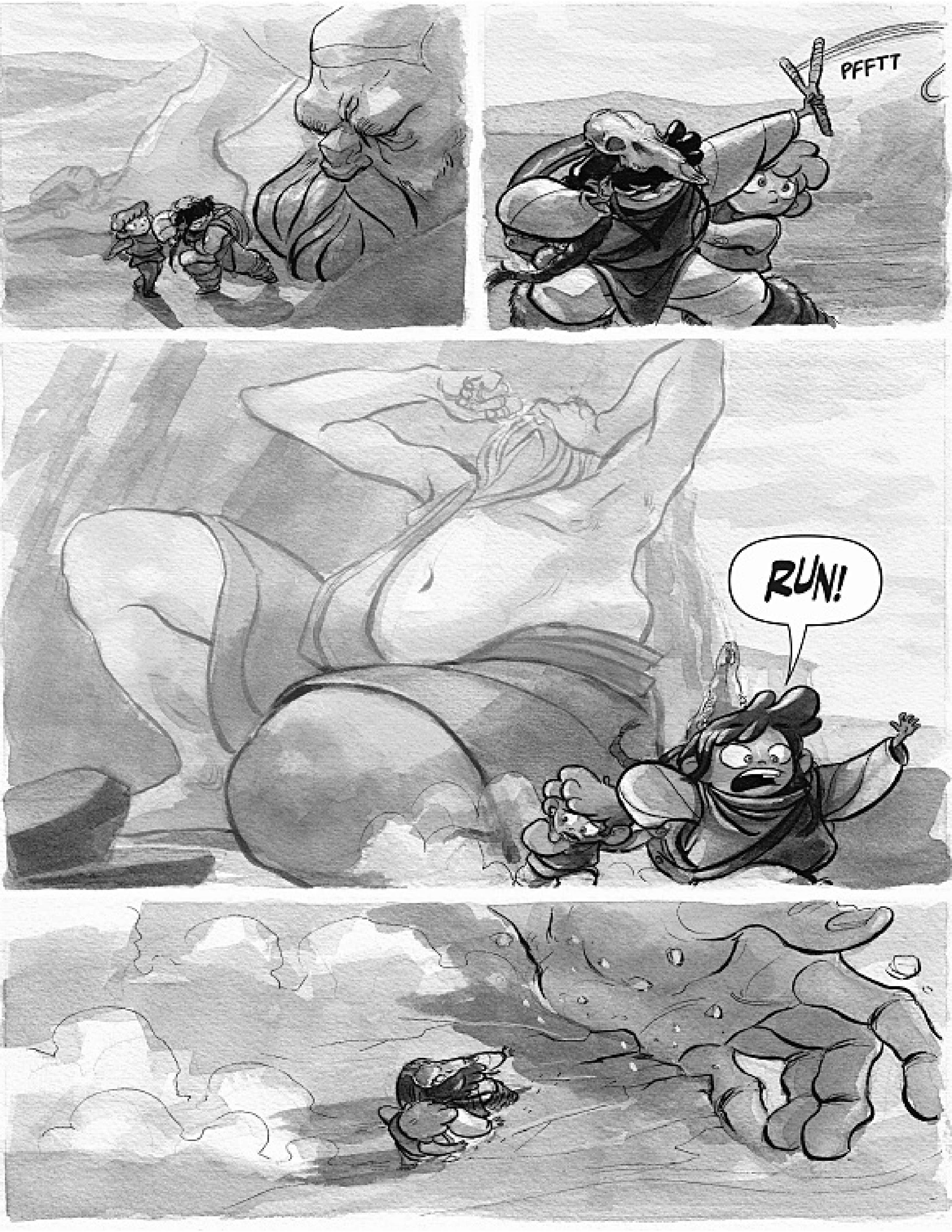

The pair followed the footsteps to a rocky cave. Thankfully, the giant was sleeping.
Spoon was caged in a tree, imprisoned beyond their reach.

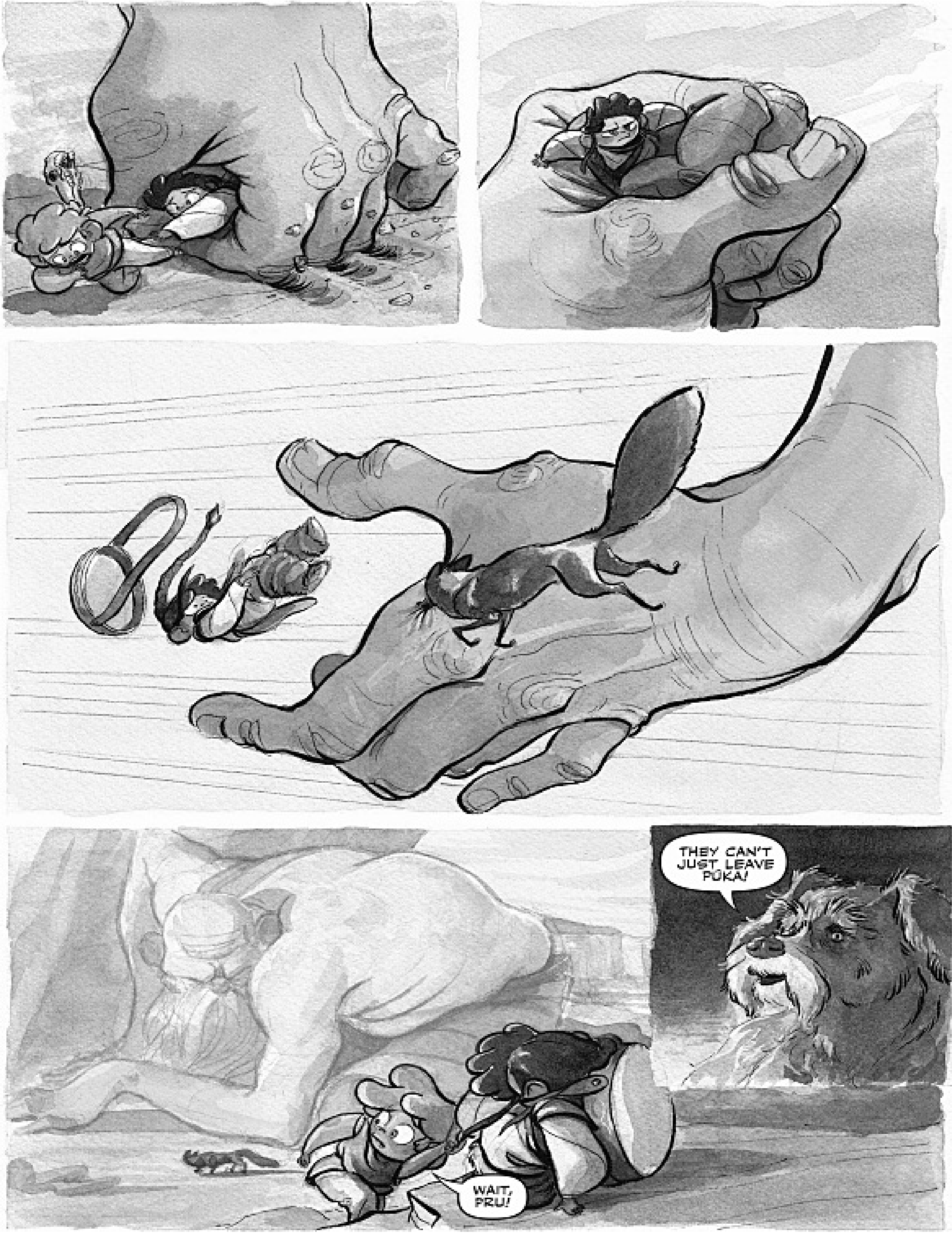

CAN YOU GET UNDER HIM?

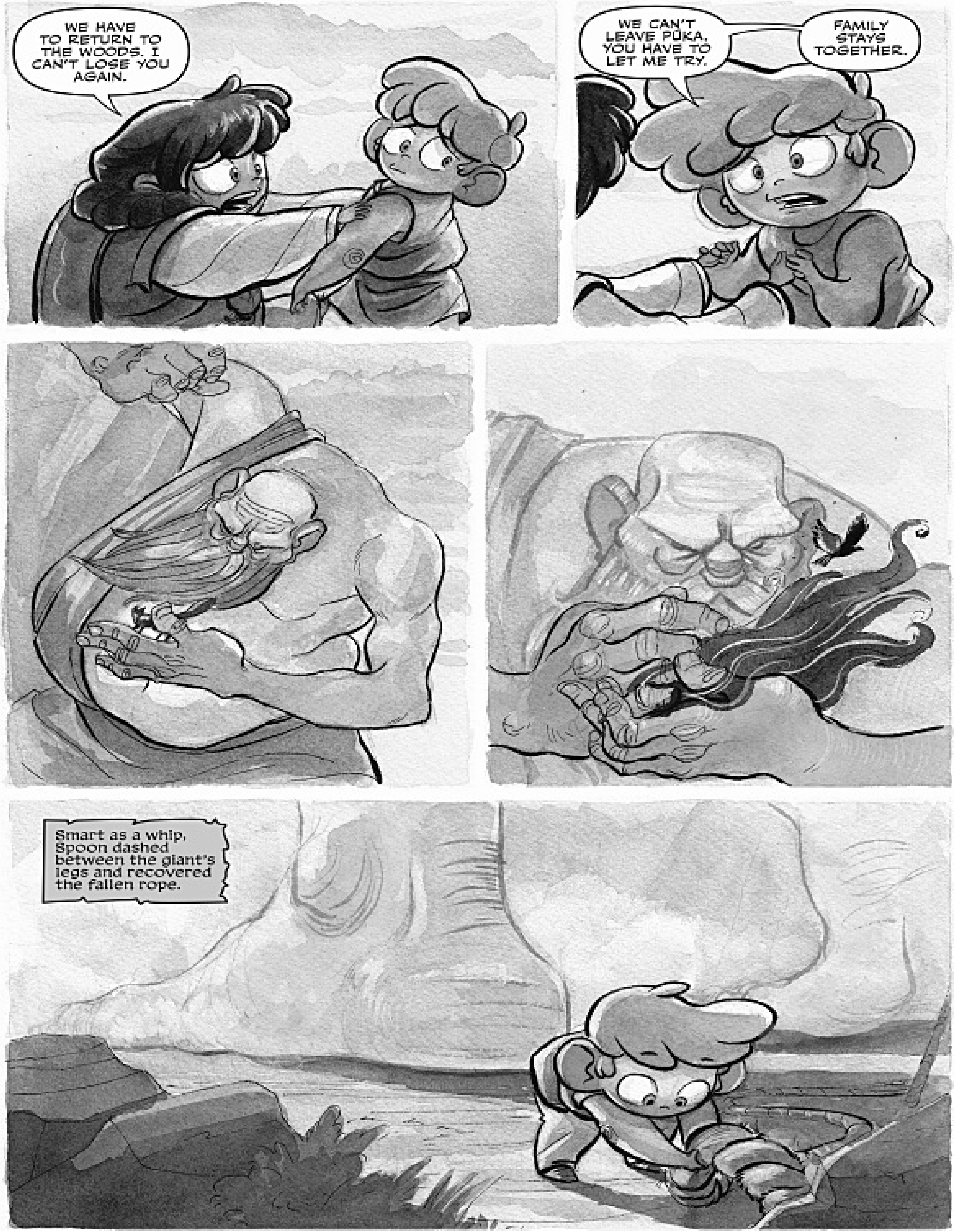

I'LL CHEW THE ROPE AND LOWER HIM.

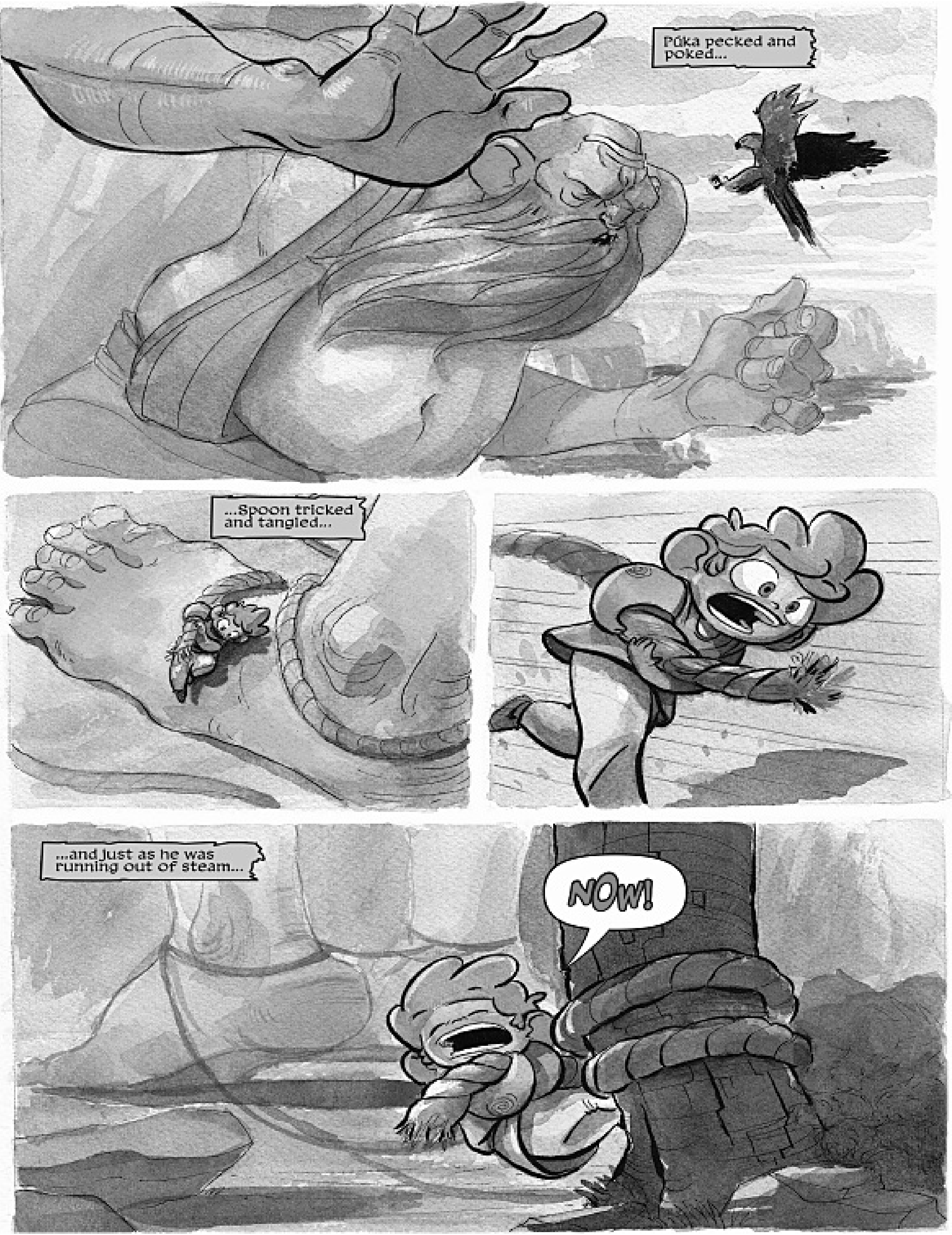

HOW DO I KNOW YOU WON'T LEAVE US BOTH WITH THE GIANT?
YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME.

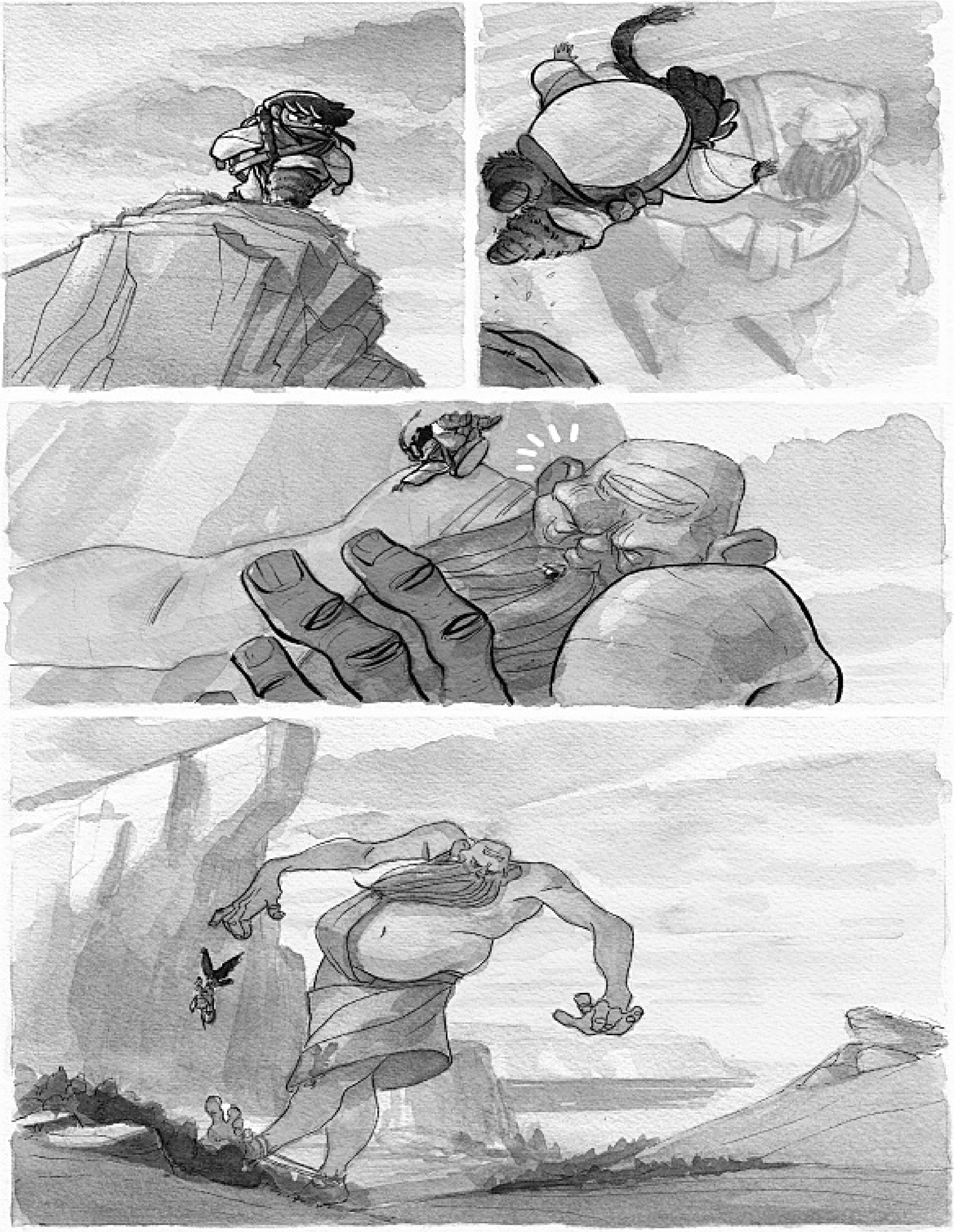

PRU!
UH OH.
!

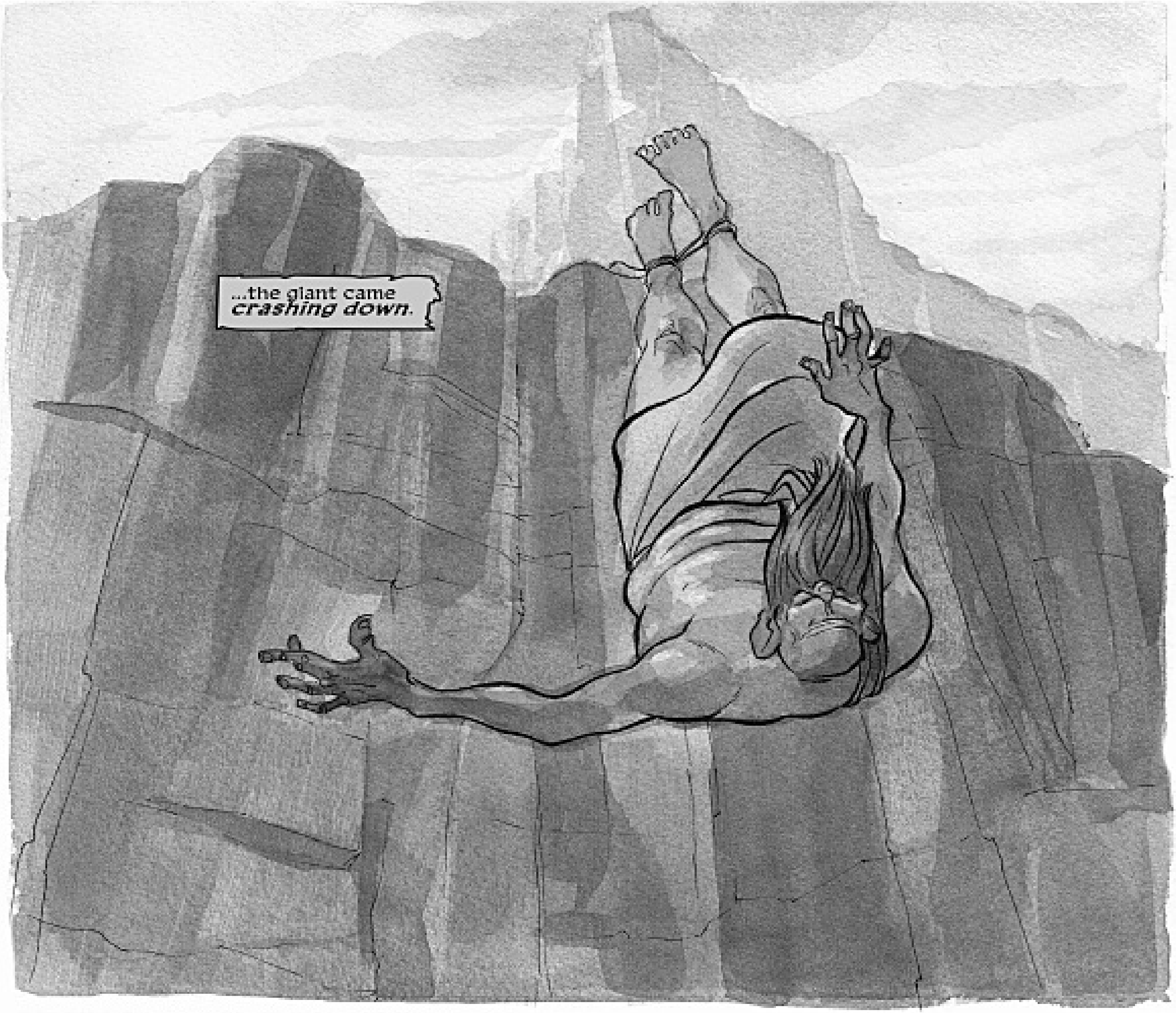

PFFTT
RUN!

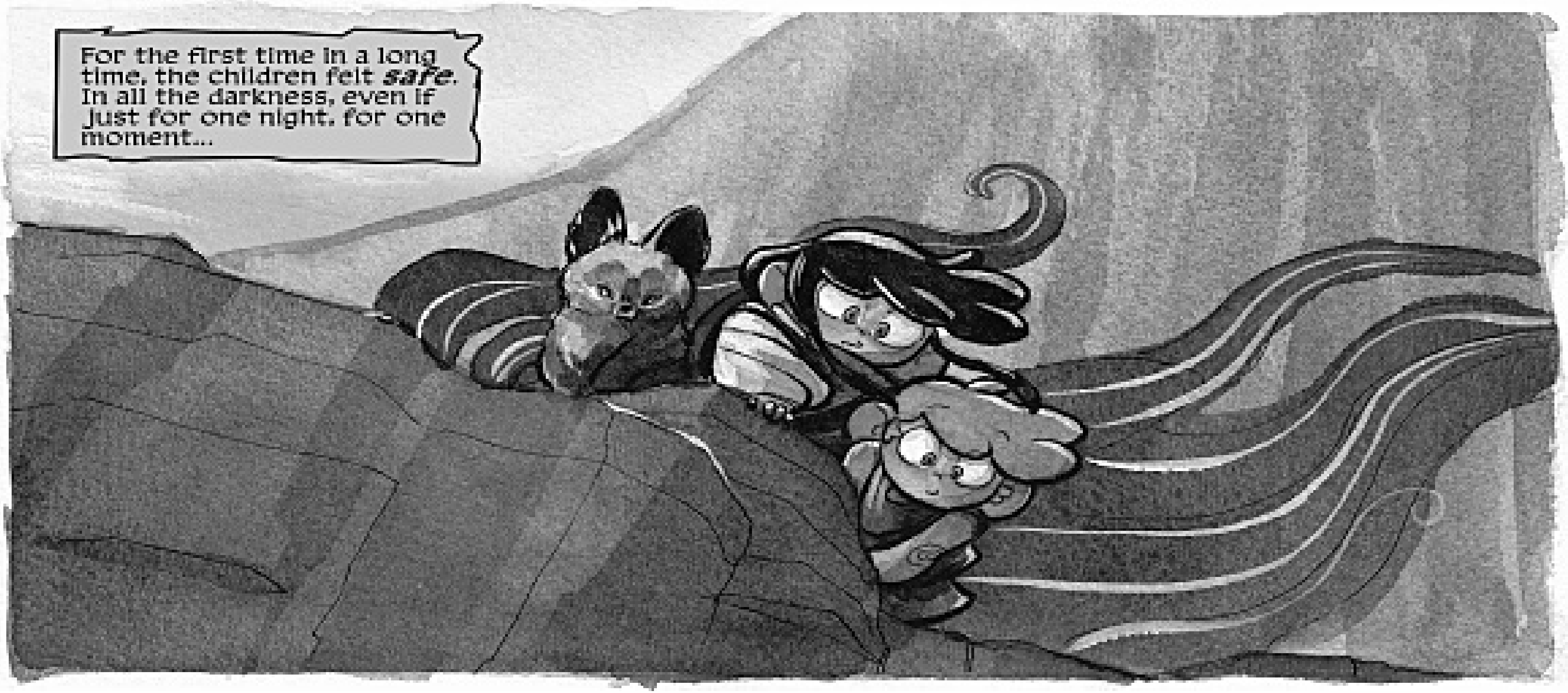

THEY CAN'T JUST LEAVE PUKA!
WAIT, PRU!

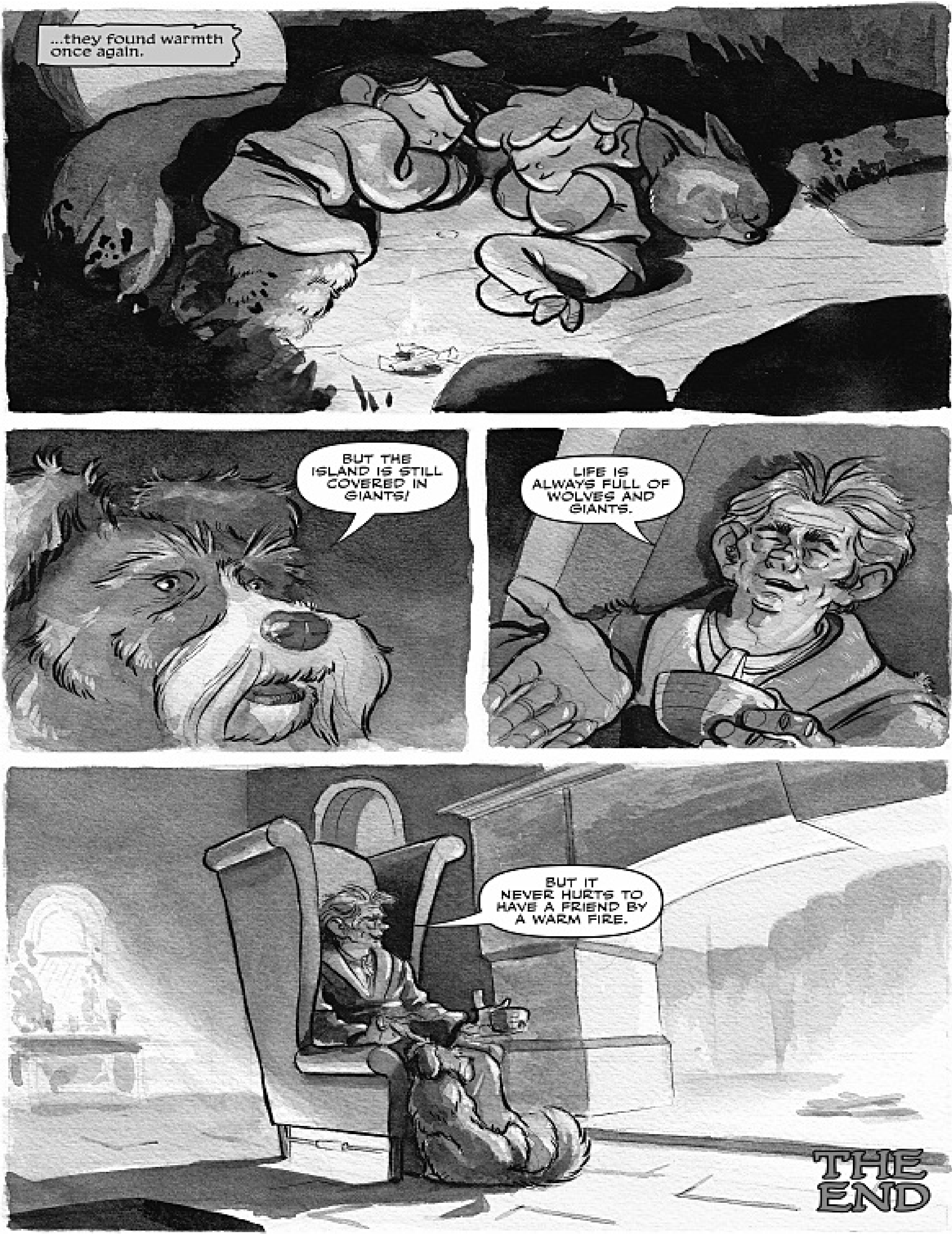

WE HAVE TO RETURN TO THE WOODS. I CAN'T LOSE YOU AGAIN.
WE CAN'T LEAVE PÚKA. YOU HAVE TO LET ME TRY.
FAMILY STAYS TOGETHER.
Smart as a whip, Spoon dashed between the giant's legs and recovered the fallen rope.


Púka pecked and poked...
...Spoon tricked and tangled...
...and just as he was running out of steam...
NOW!




...the giant came *crashing down*.


For the first time in a long time, the children felt *safe*. In all the darkness, even if just for one night, for one moment...


...they found warmth once again.
BUT THE ISLAND IS STILL COVERED IN GIANTS!
LIFE IS ALWAYS FULL OF WOLVES AND GIANTS.
BUT IT NEVER HURTS TO HAVE A FRIEND BY A WARM FIRE.
THE END

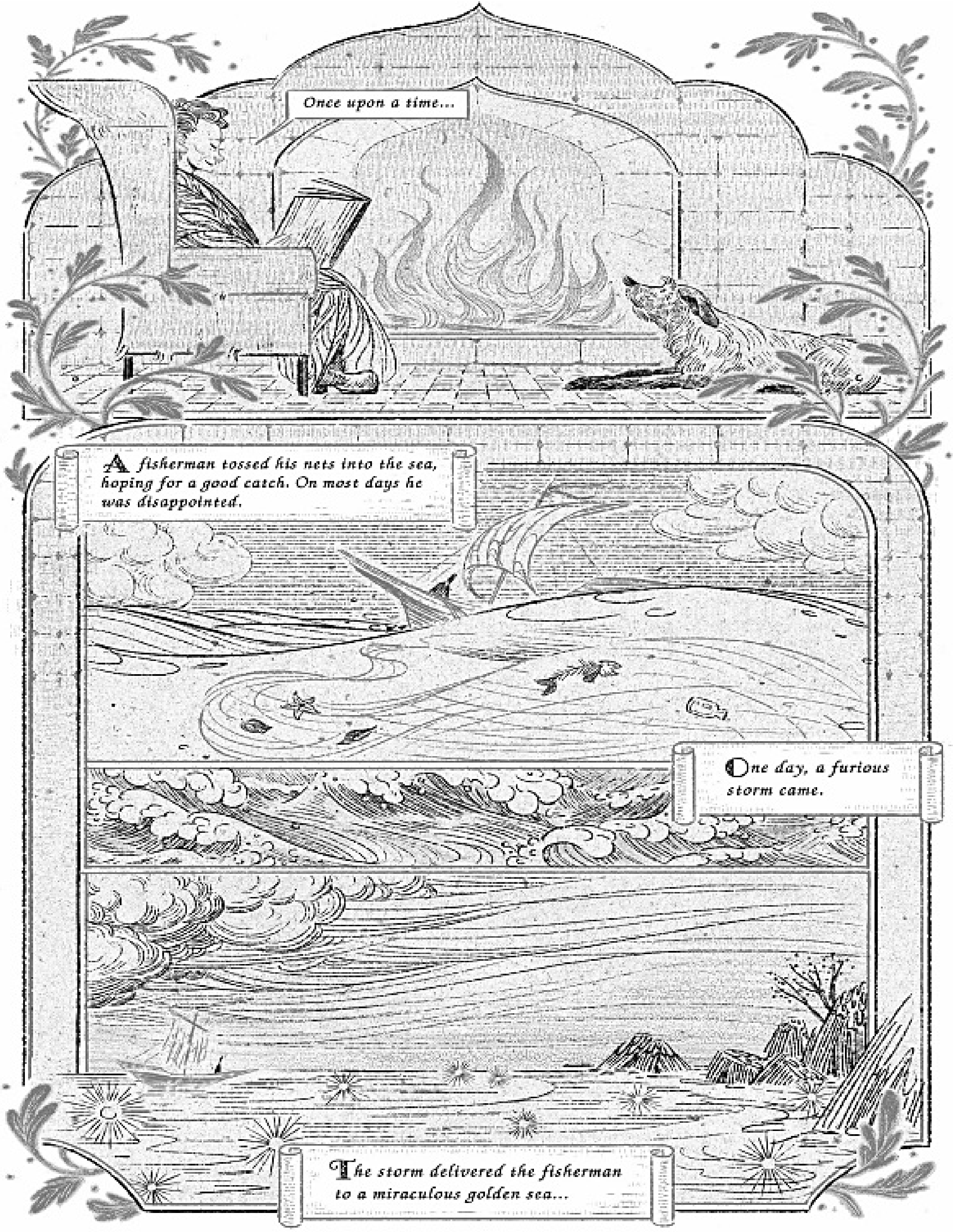
TALE FOUR COVER
FEIFEI RUAN

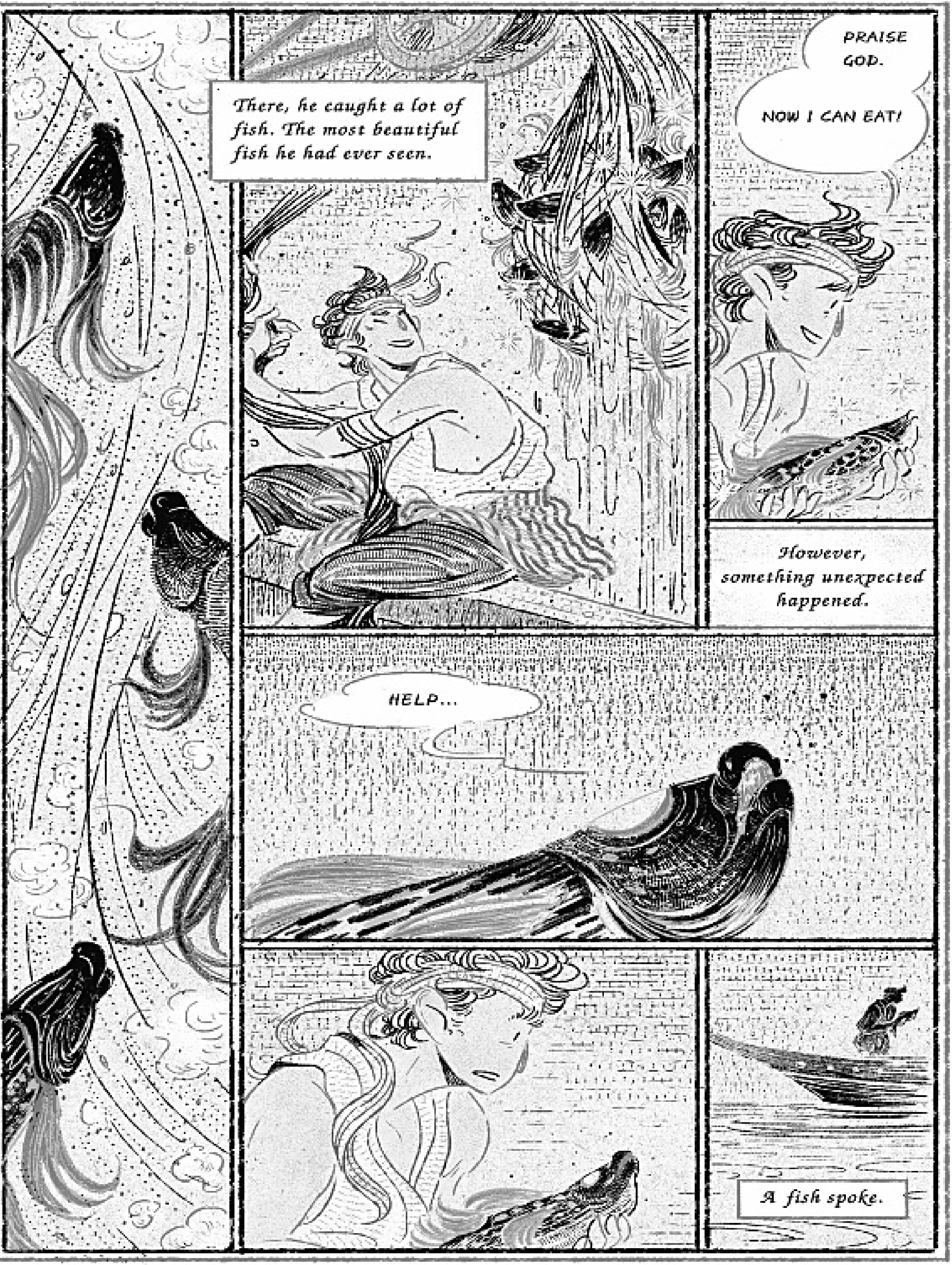
the FISHERMAN and the GIANT

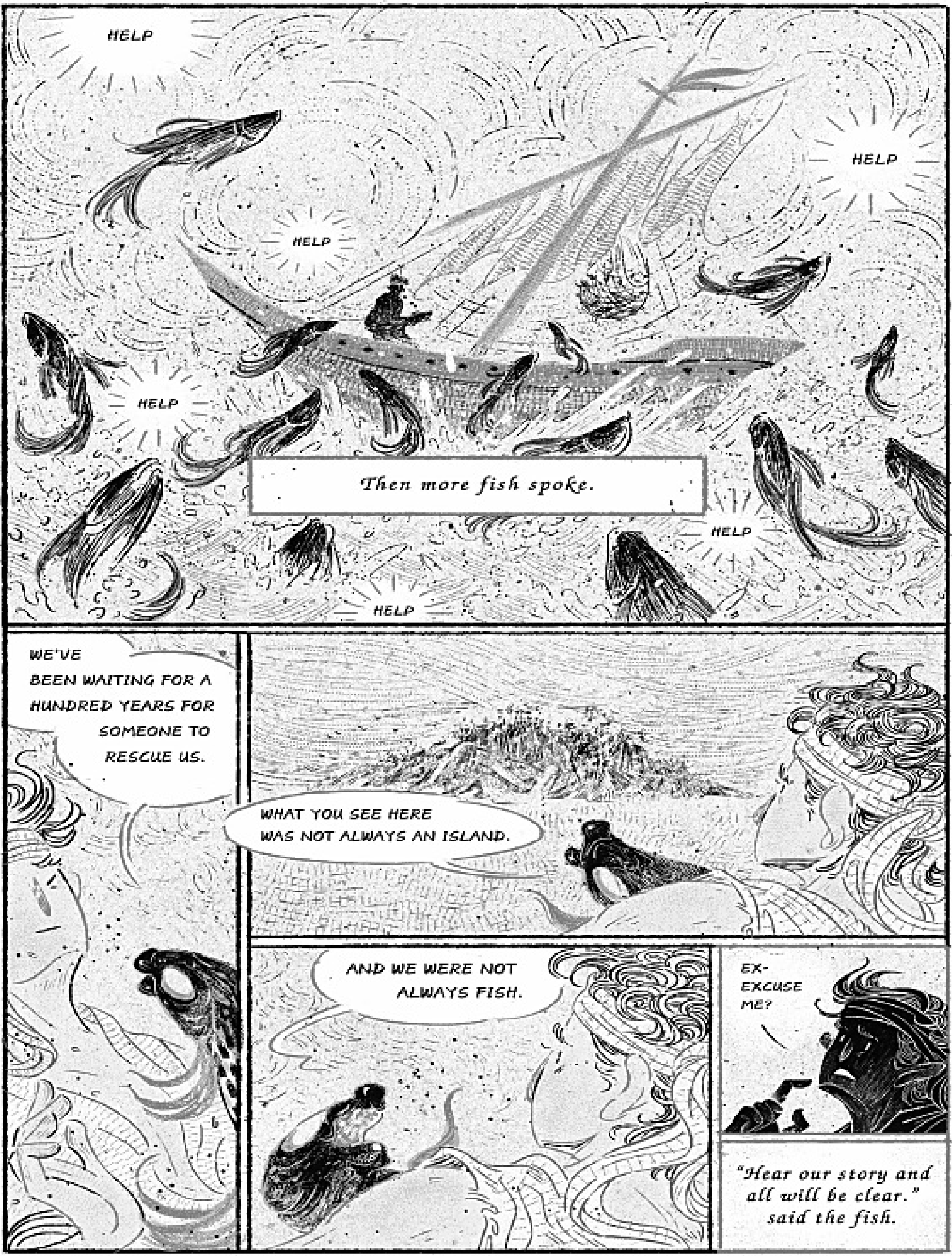
"The Fisherman and the Giant" is an adaptation of a few Middle Eastern folk tales collected in *One Thousand and One Nights* (also known as *Arabian Nights*). Fascinated by the mystery and imagination of that collection, I managed to bring a slice of the magical orient to the world of Jim Henson.

The talking fish, evil king, and stone soldiers are some of the fantastical elements that I pulled from the original stories. To help the story flow, I also added some additional imagination. Like the three mice servants who become a three-headed dog and the giant's tears which provide his magical power and reveal his heartbreaking backstory. For art direction, I wanted to bring ancient Middle Eastern style of art to life. Besides using decorative frames and patterns, I also broke from standard layout concepts and experimented with new possibilities. I hope my version of this tale offers a fresh taste of a Middle Eastern classic.

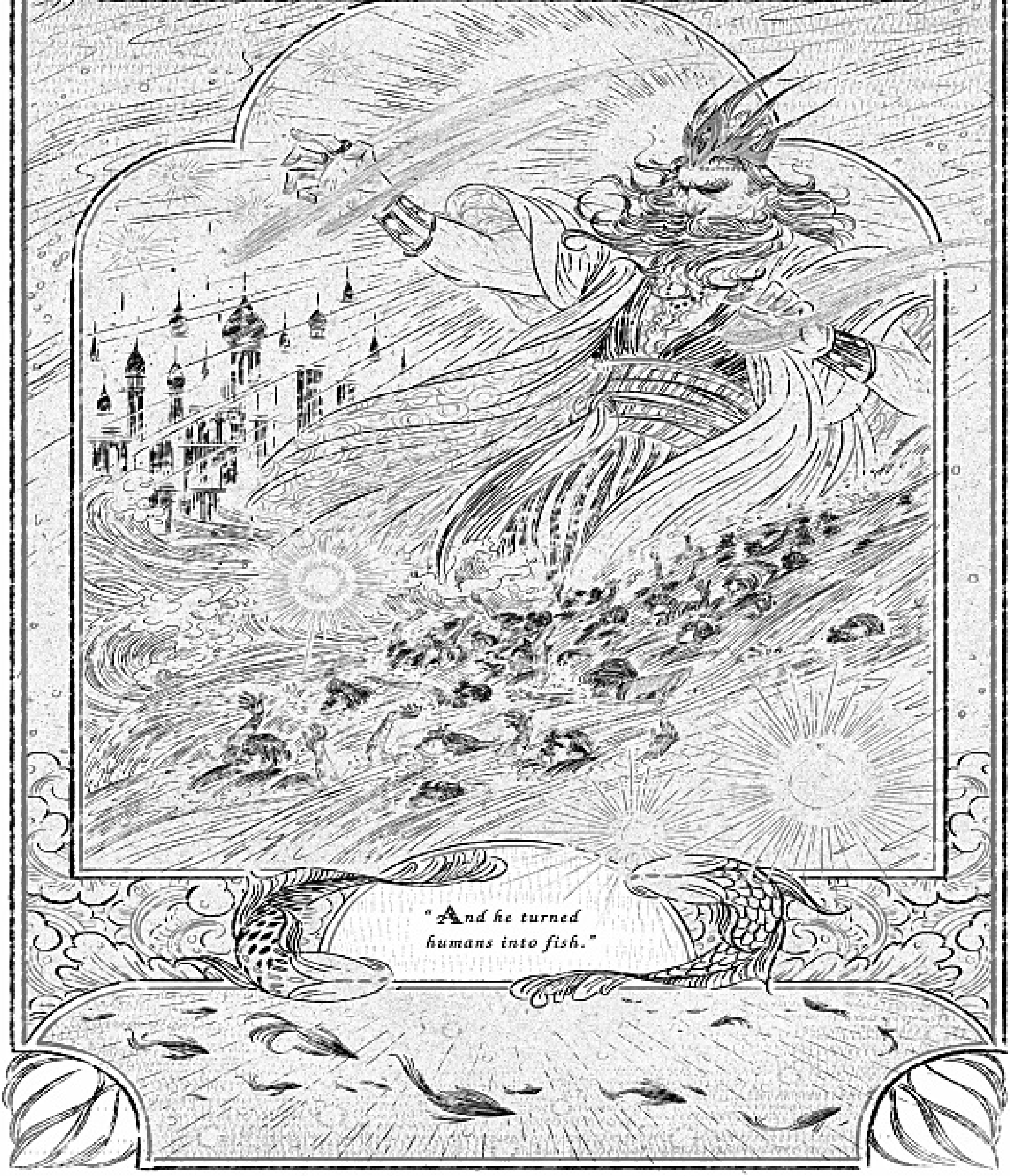
– Feifei Ruan


Once upon a time...
A fisherman tossed his nets into the sea, hoping for a good catch. On most days he was disappointed.
One day, a furious storm came.
The storm delivered the fisherman to a miraculous golden sea...

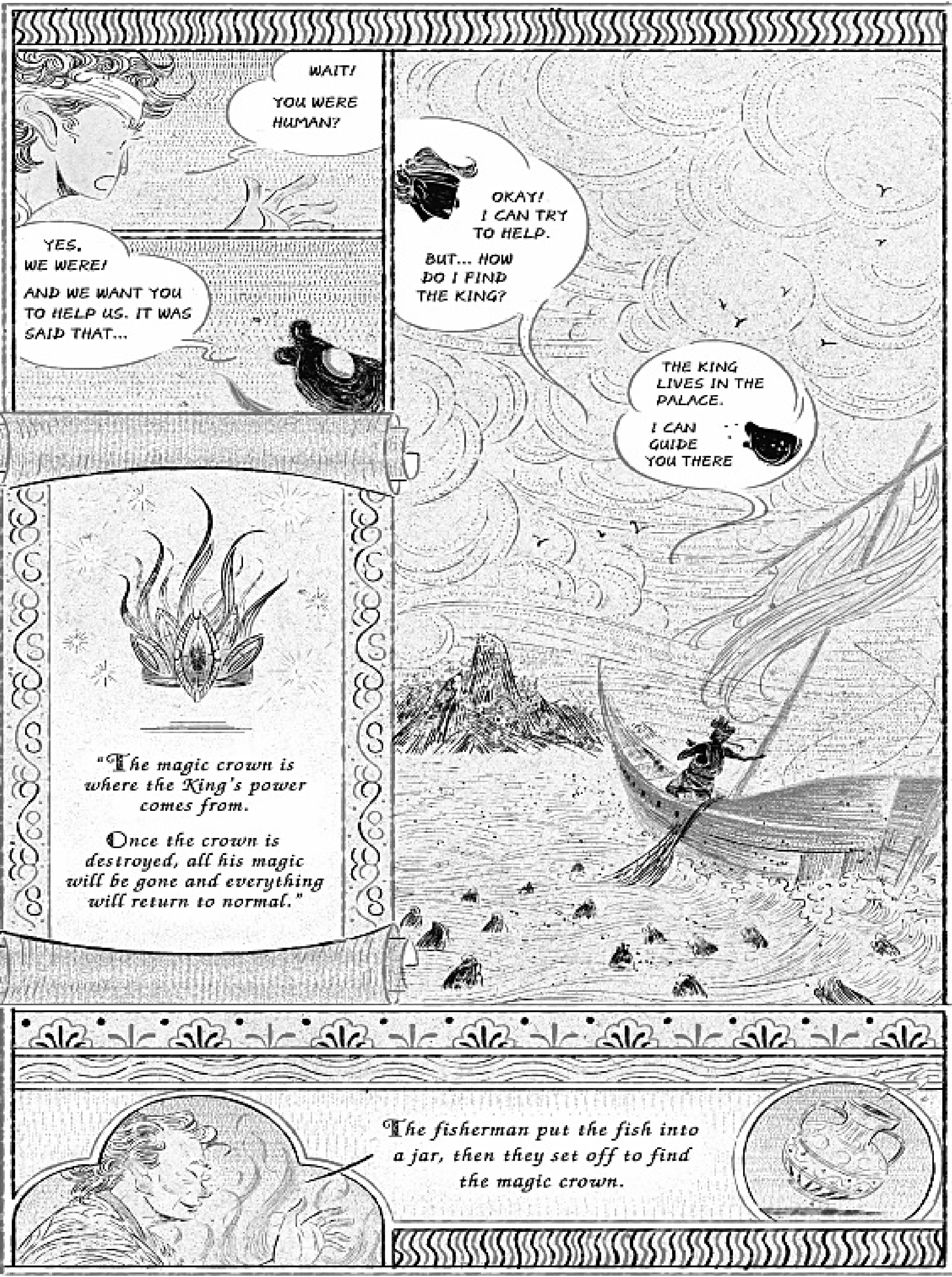

There, he caught a lot of fish. The most beautiful fish he had ever seen.
PRAISE GOD.
NOW I CAN EAT!
However, something unexpected happened.
HELP...
A fish spoke.


HELP
HELP
HELP
HELP
HELP
HELP
Then more fish spoke.
WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A HUNDRED YEARS FOR SOMEONE TO RESCUE US.
WHAT YOU SEE HERE WAS NOT ALWAYS AN ISLAND.
AND WE WERE NOT ALWAYS FISH.
EX- EXCUSE ME?
"Hear our story and all will be clear." said the fish.

"A long time ago, there was a place full of peace and joy. But one day, it was all destroyed by the Giant King who had a strange magical power. He turned our once beautiful kingdom into the barren island you see before you.



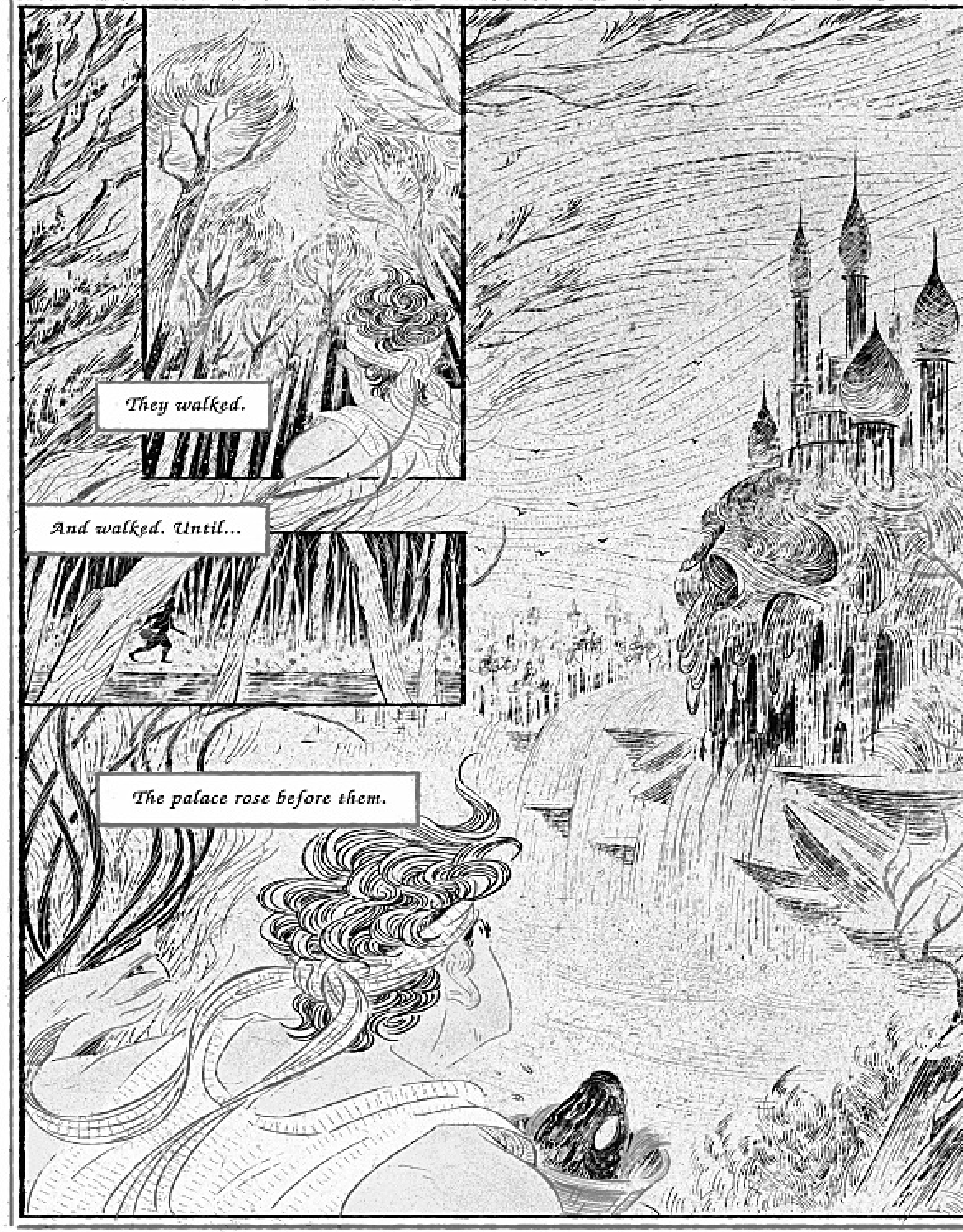
"And he turned humans into fish."

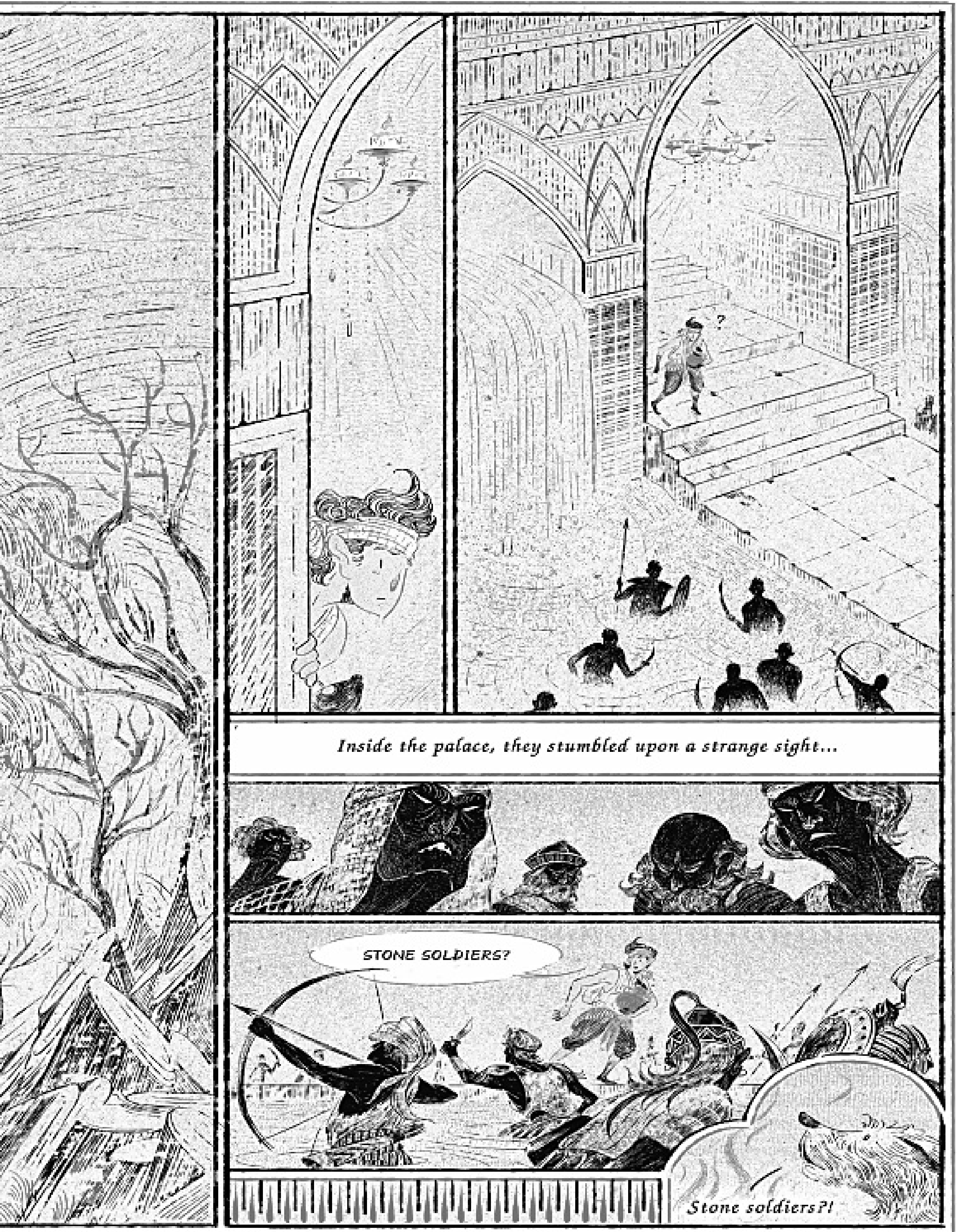

WAIT!
YOU WERE HUMAN?
YES, WE WERE!
AND WE WANT YOU TO HELP US. IT WAS SAID THAT...
OKAY! I CAN TRY TO HELP.
BUT... HOW DO I FIND THE KING?
THE KING LIVES IN THE PALACE.
I CAN GUIDE YOU THERE

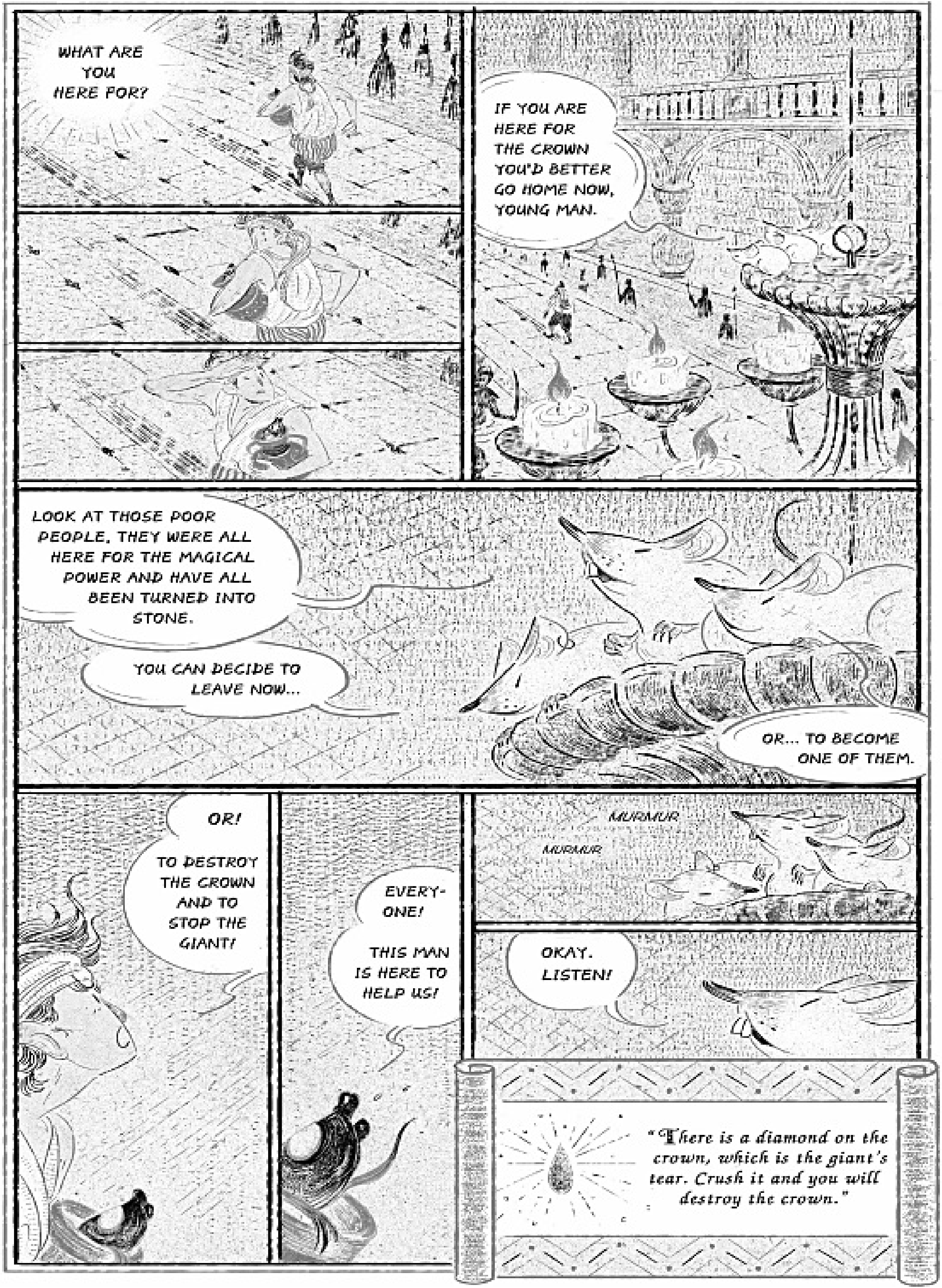
"The magic crown is where the King's power comes from.

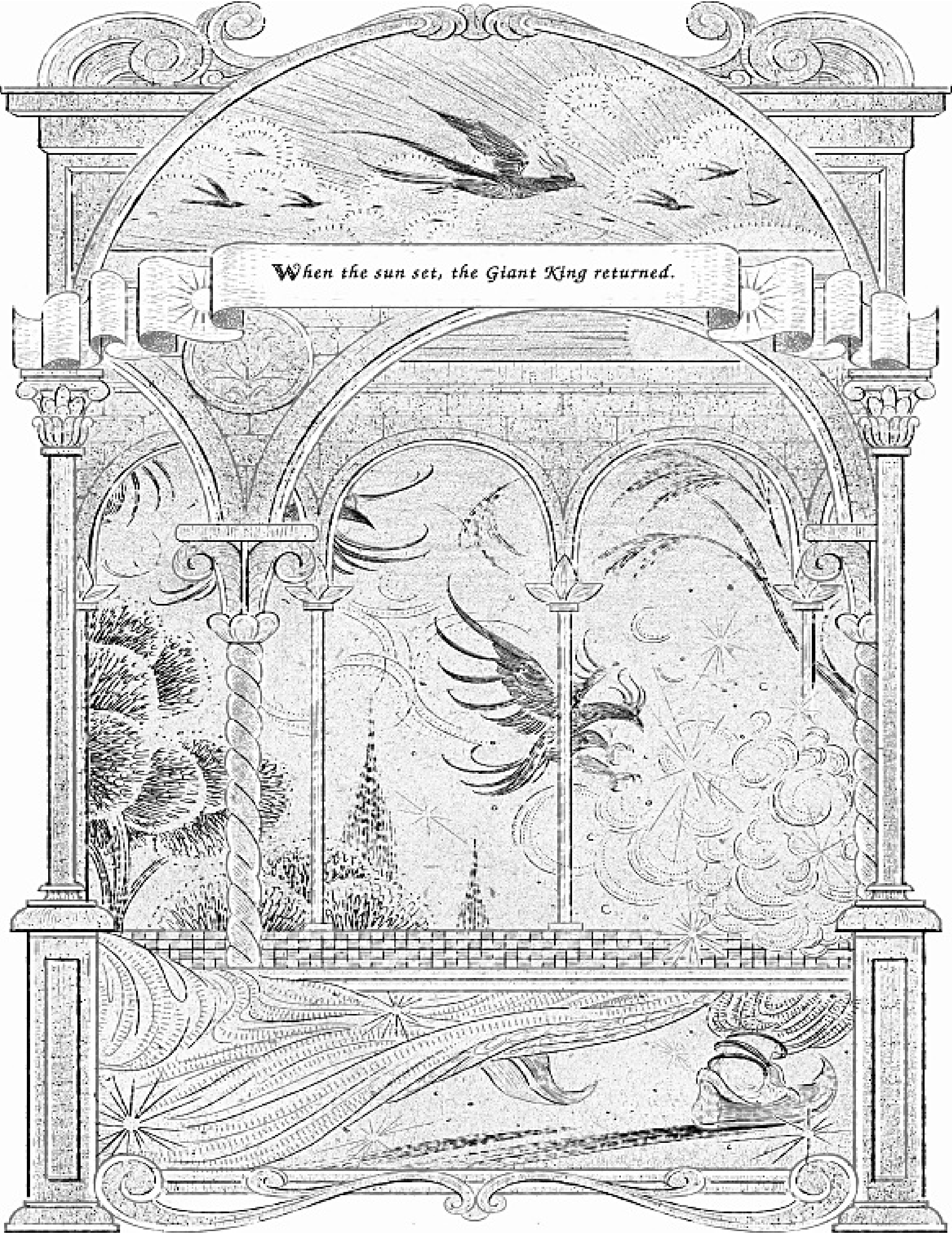
Once the crown is destroyed, all his magic will be gone and everything will return to normal."

The fisherman put the fish into a jar, then they set off to find the magic crown.

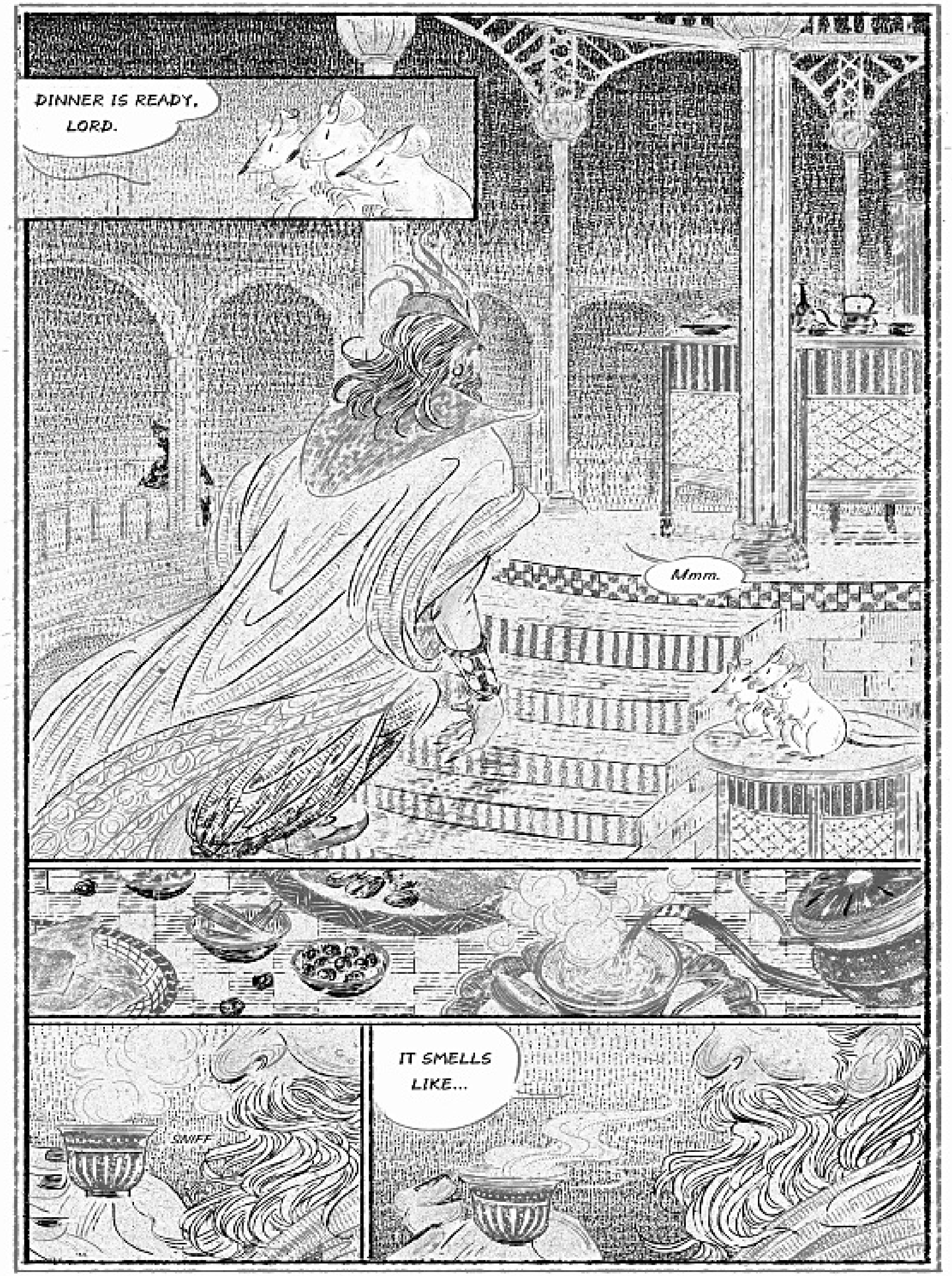

They walked.
And walked. Until...
The palace rose before them.

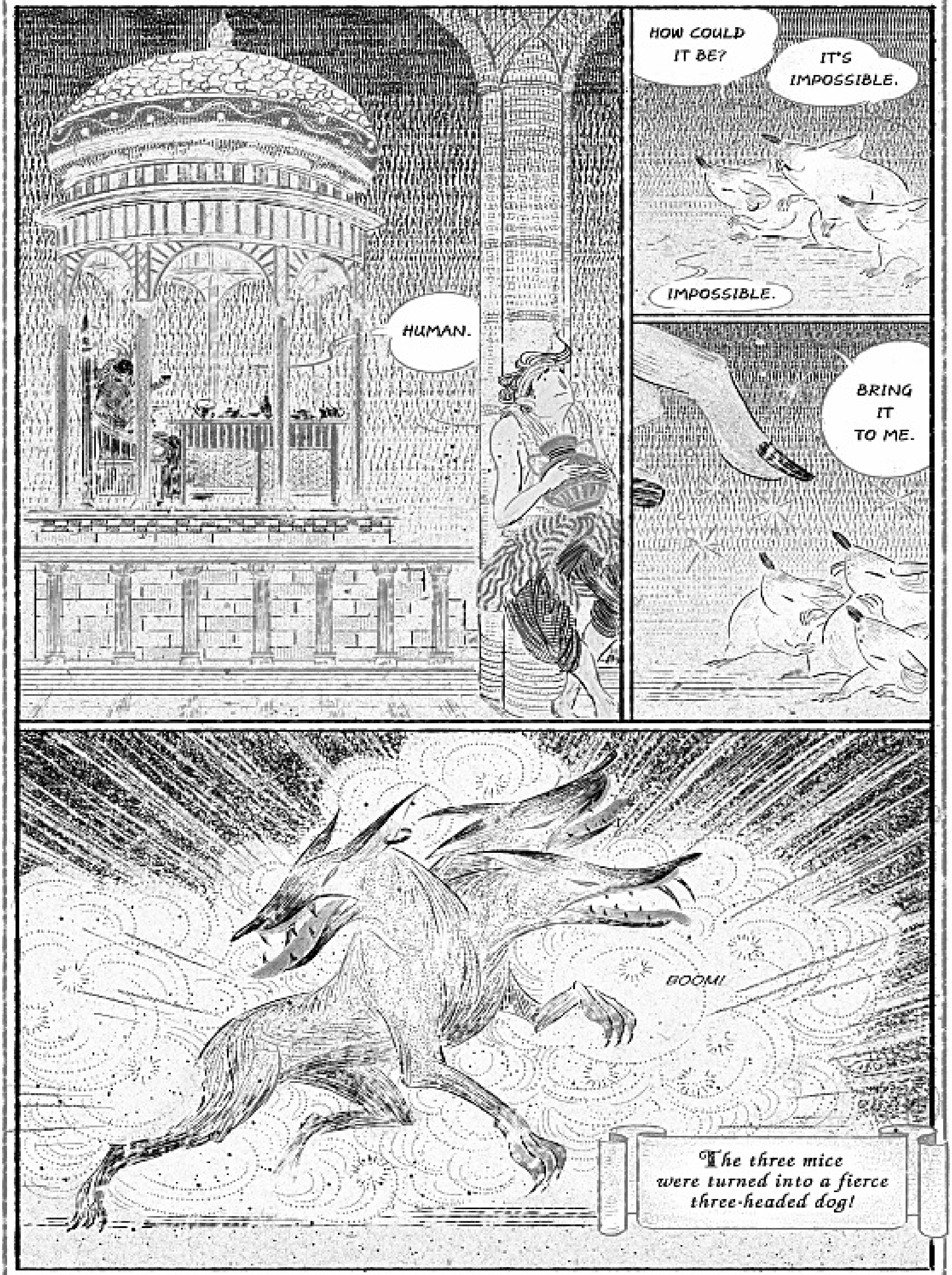

?
Inside the palace, they stumbled upon a strange sight...
STONE SOLDIERS?
Stone soldiers?!

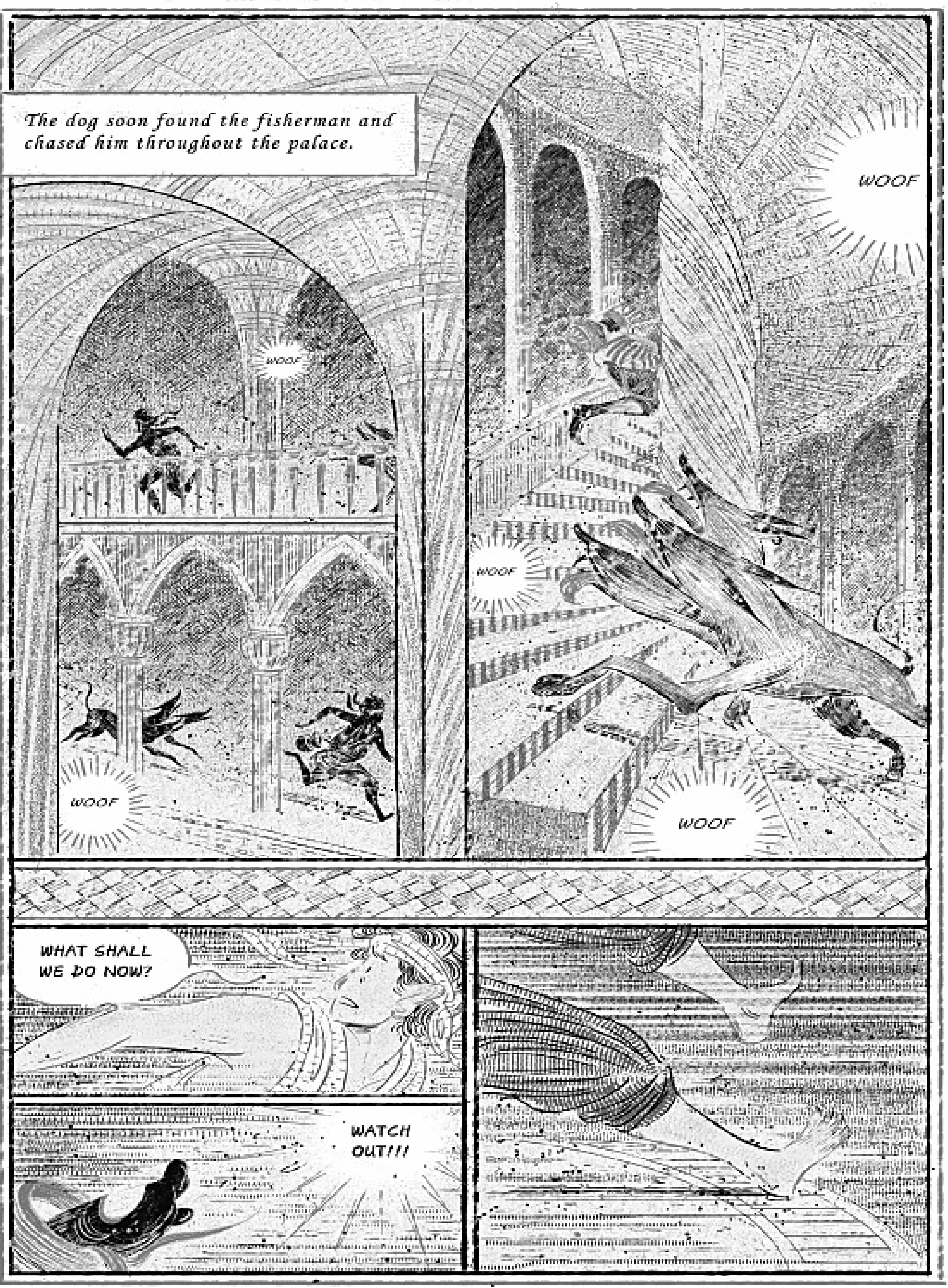

WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?
IF YOU ARE HERE FOR THE CROWN YOU'D BETTER GO HOME NOW, YOUNG MAN.
LOOK AT THOSE POOR PEOPLE, THEY WERE ALL HERE FOR THE MAGICAL POWER AND HAVE ALL BEEN TURNED INTO STONE.
YOU CAN DECIDE TO LEAVE NOW...
OR... TO BECOME ONE OF THEM.
OR! TO DESTROY THE CROWN AND TO STOP THE GIANT!
EVERY-ONE! THIS MAN IS HERE TO HELP US!
MURMUR
MURMUR
OKAY. LISTEN!
"There is a diamond on the crown, which is the giant's tear. Crush it and you will destroy the crown."



When the sun set, the Giant King returned.

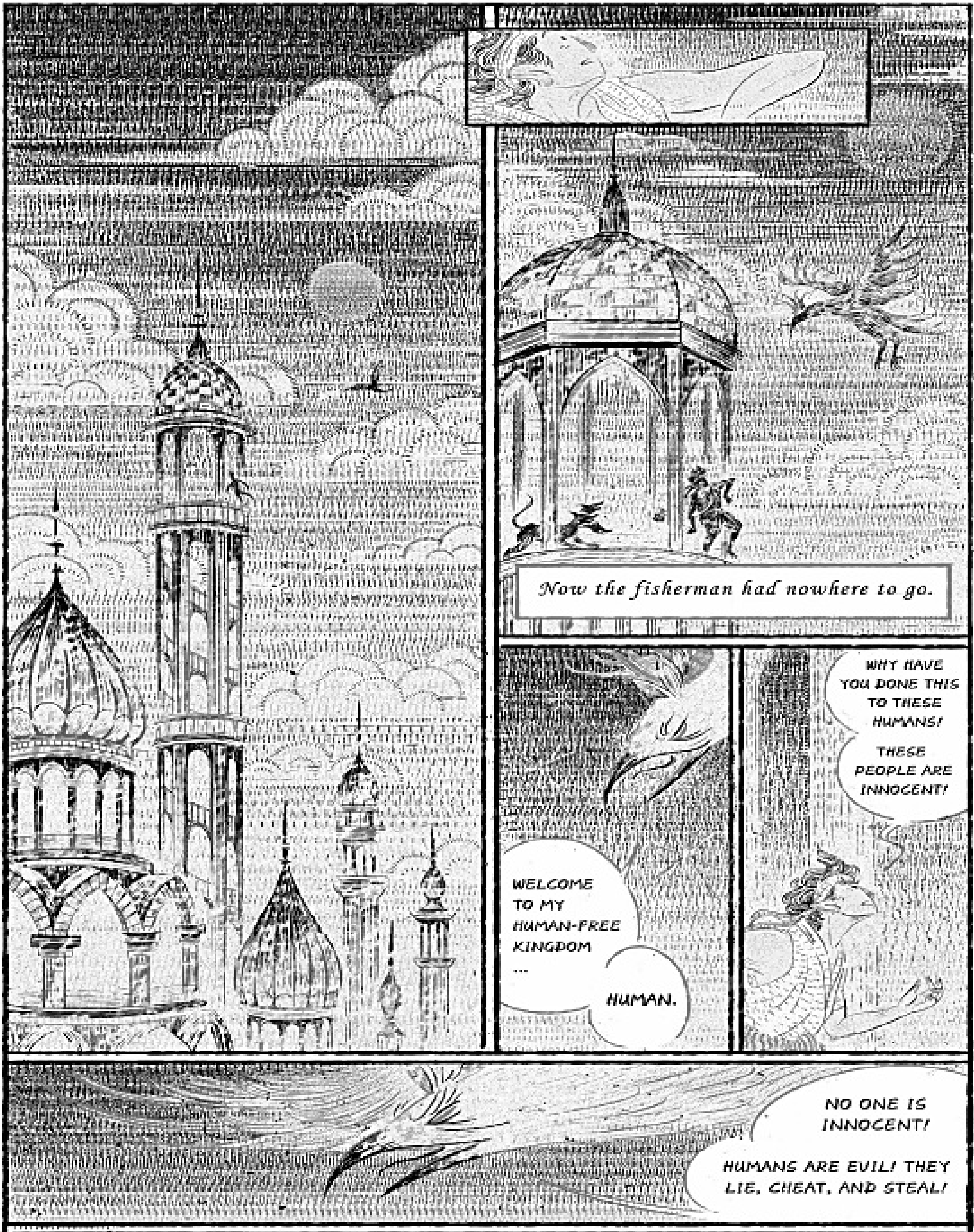

DINNER IS READY, LORD.
Mmm.
SNIFF
IT SMELLS LIKE...


HUMAN.
HOW COULD IT BE?
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
IMPOSSIBLE.
BRING IT TO ME.
BOOM!
The three mice were turned into a fierce three-headed dog!



The dog soon found the fisherman and chased him throughout the palace.

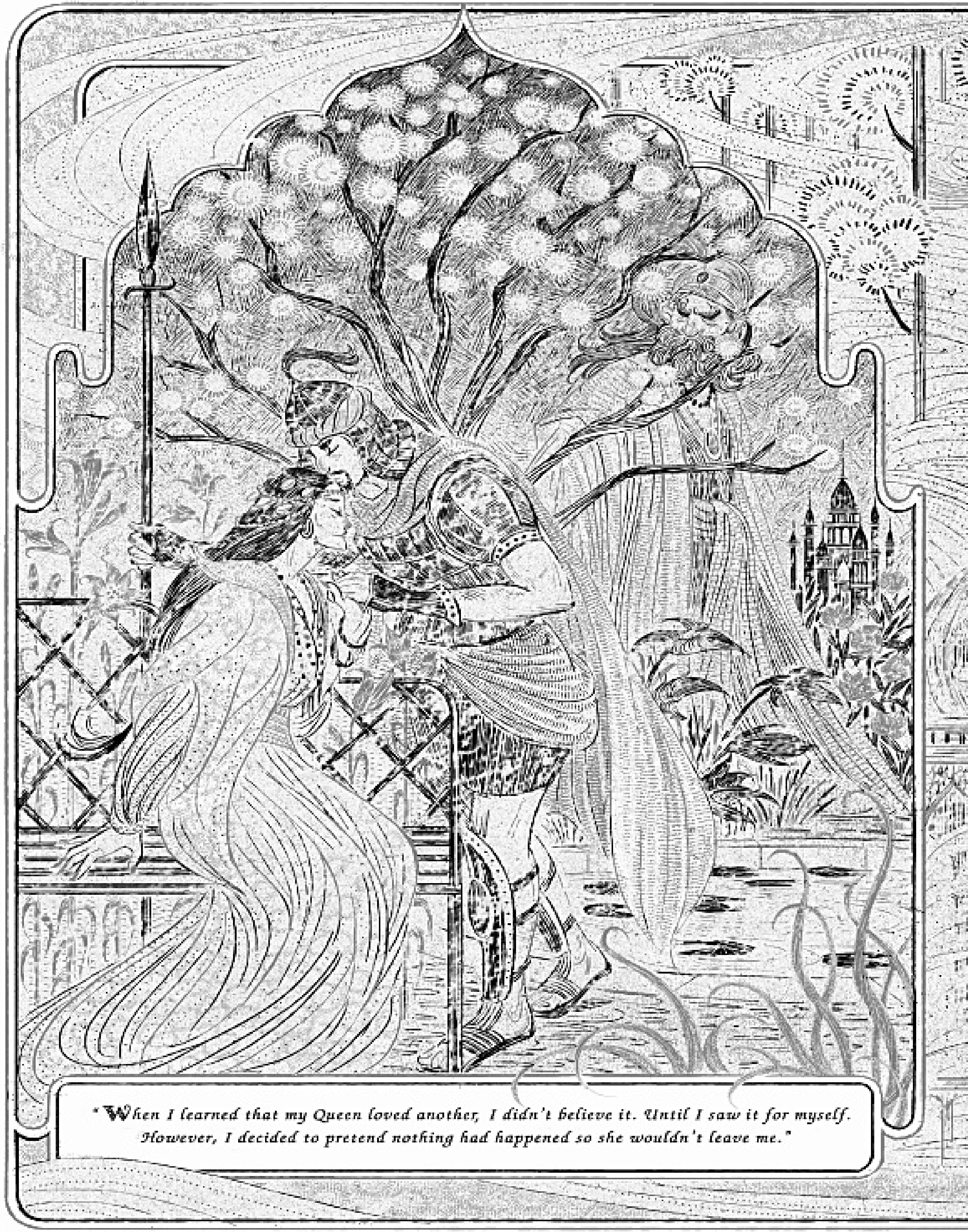
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?
WATCH OUT!!!



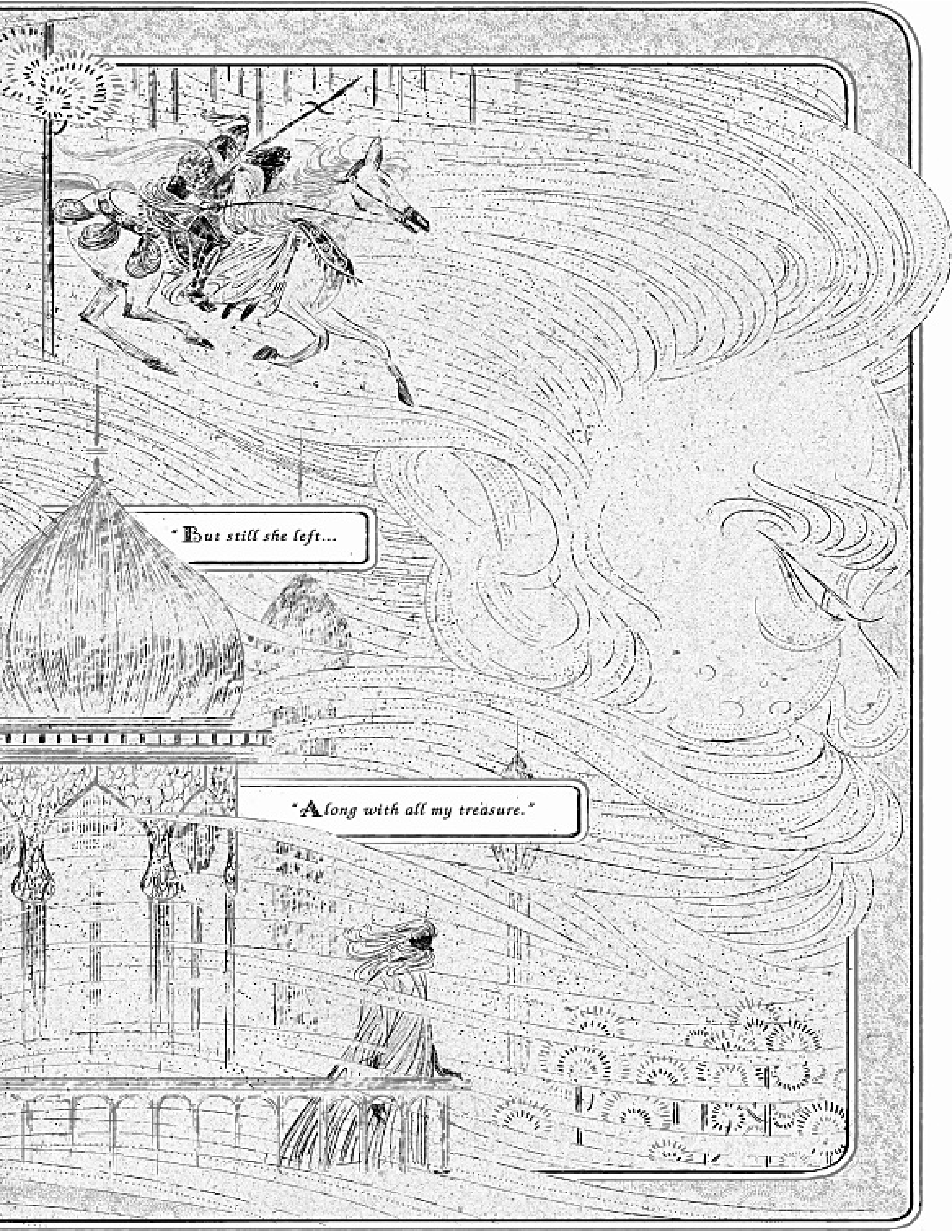
Now the fisherman had nowhere to go.

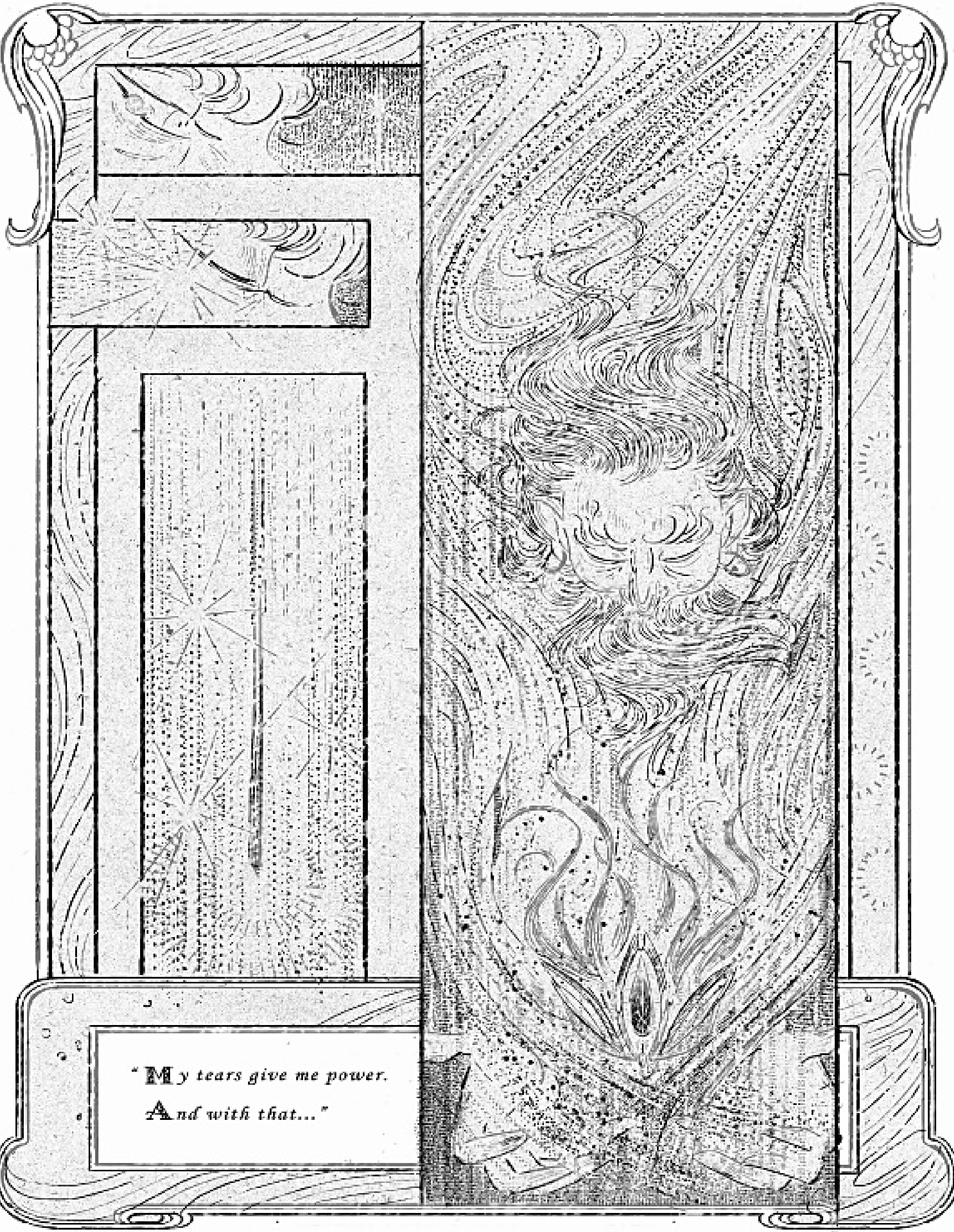
WELCOME TO MY HUMAN-FREE KINGDOM ...
HUMAN.
WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS TO THESE HUMANS!
THESE PEOPLE ARE INNOCENT!
NO ONE IS INNOCENT!
HUMANS ARE EVIL! THEY LIE, CHEAT, AND STEAL!

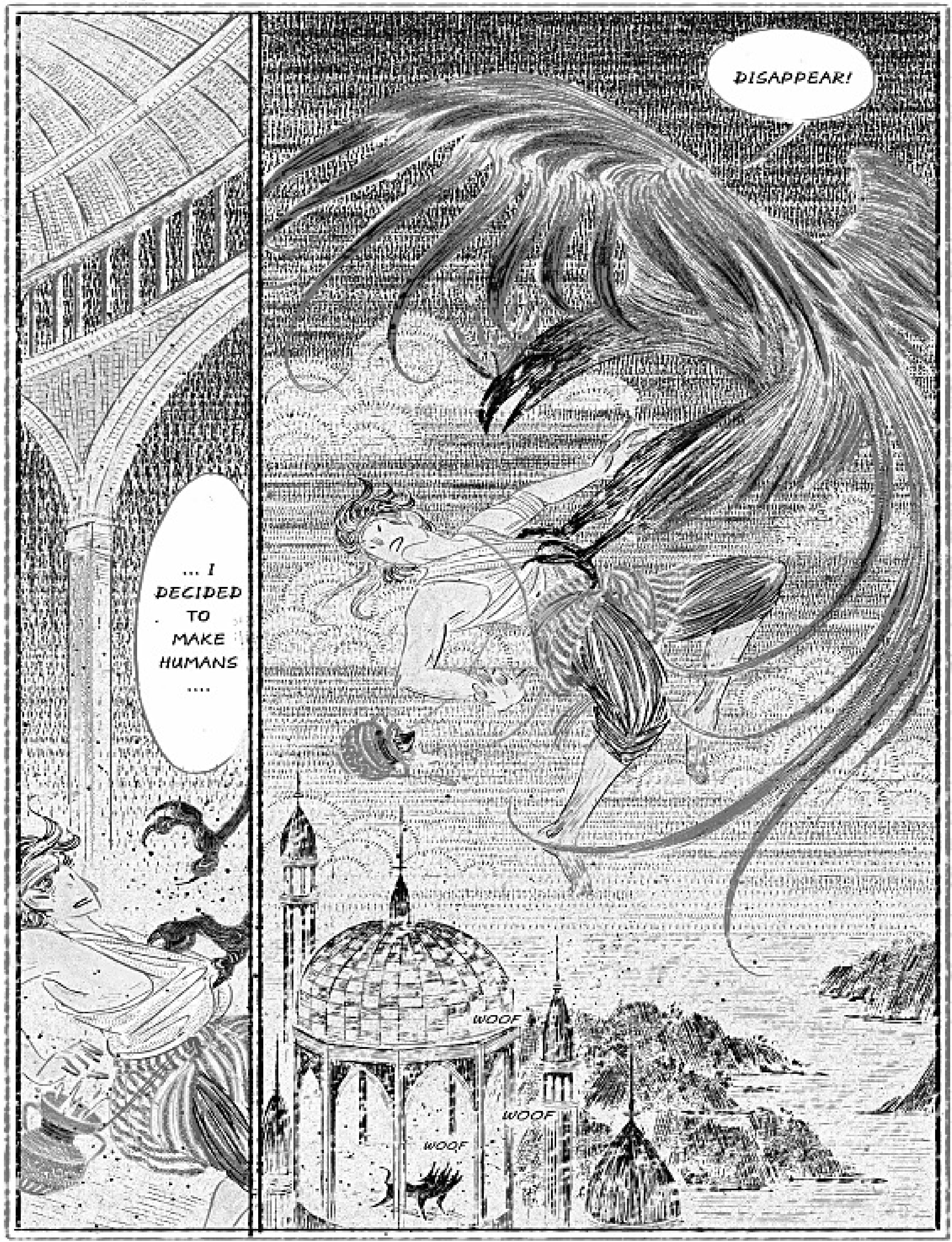
"Hear my story and you shall understand." said the King.

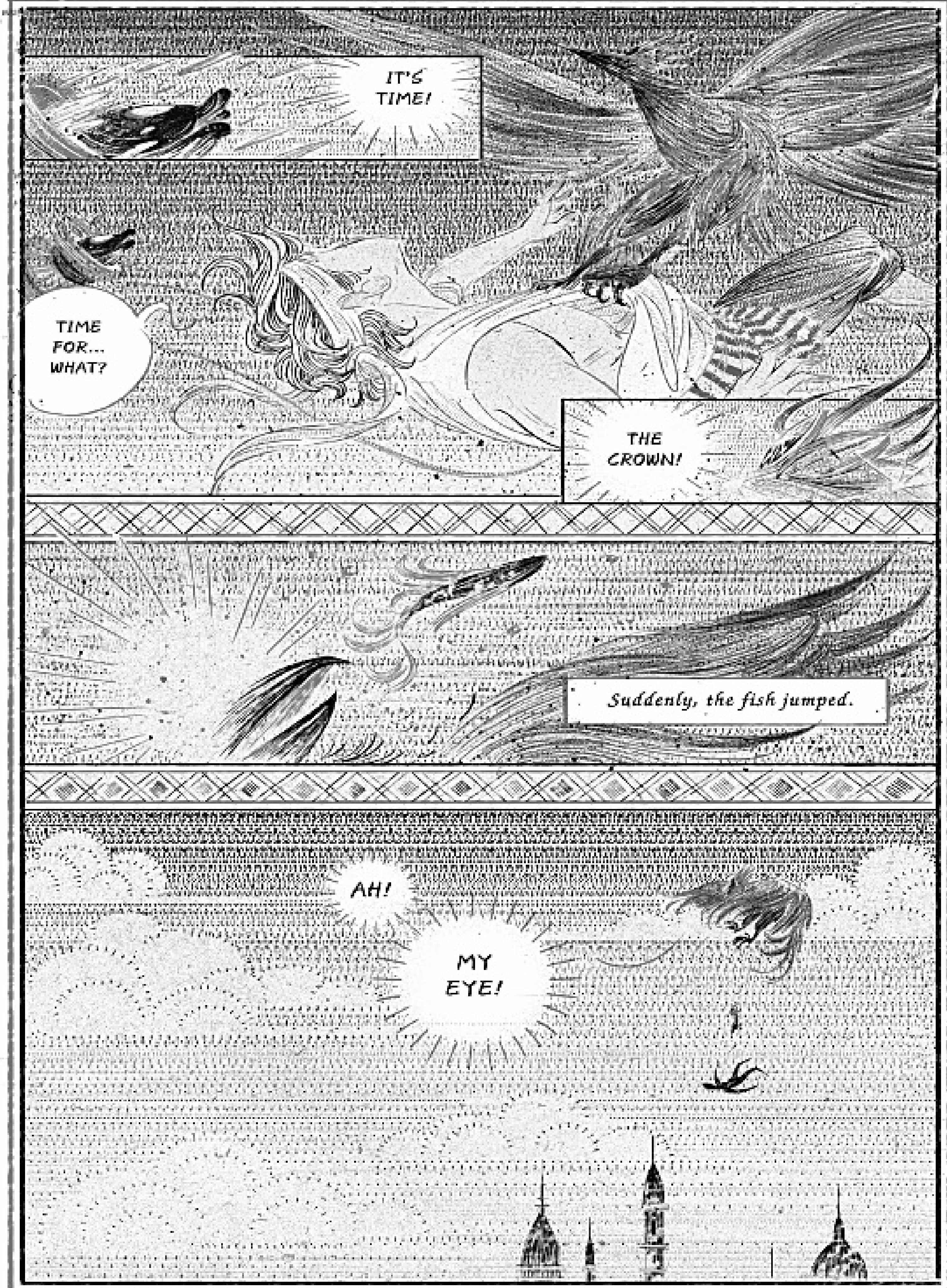


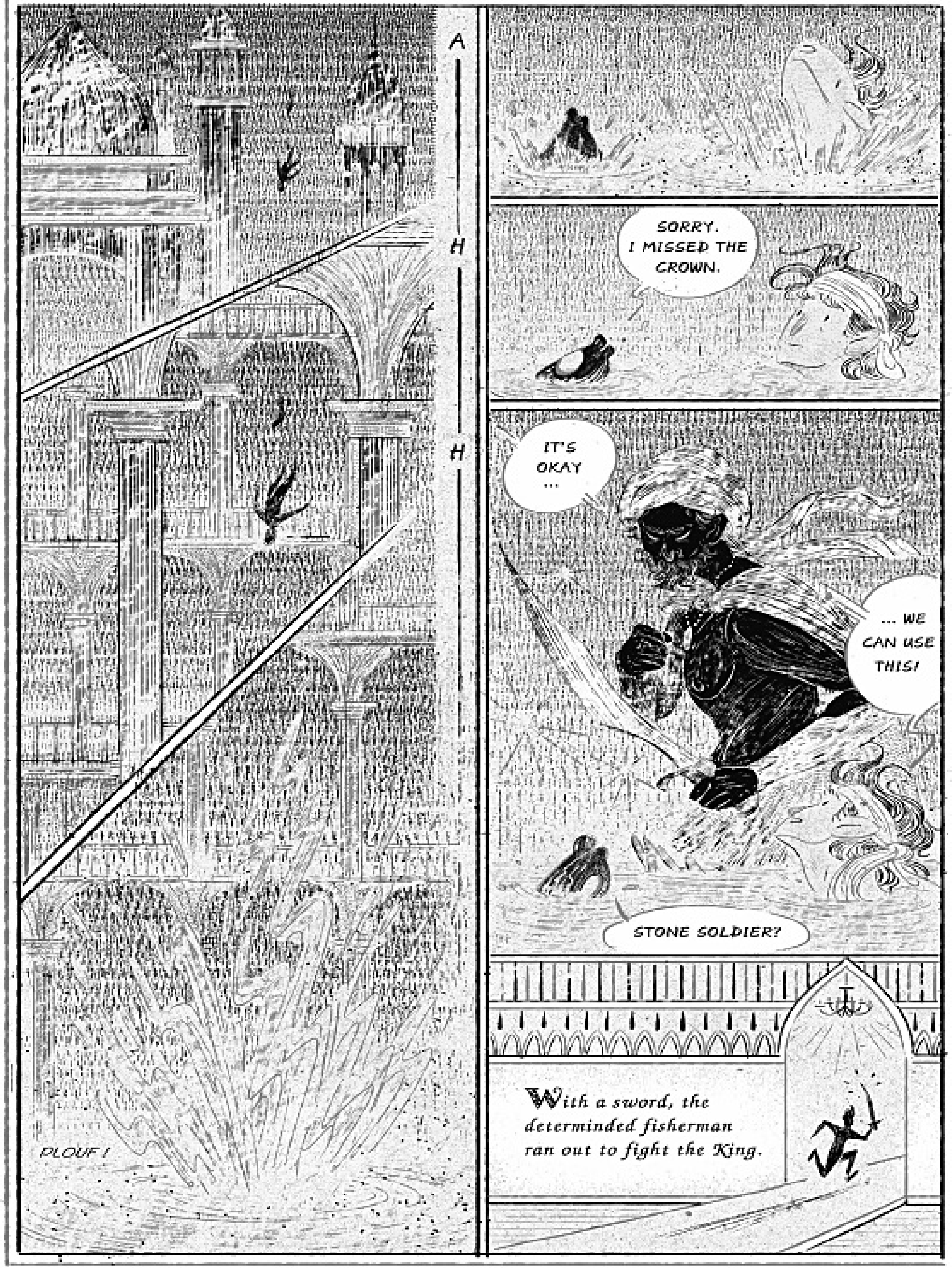
"When I learned that my Queen loved another, I didn't believe it. Until I saw it for myself. However, I decided to pretend nothing had happened so she wouldn't leave me."


"But still she left...
"Along with all my treasure."

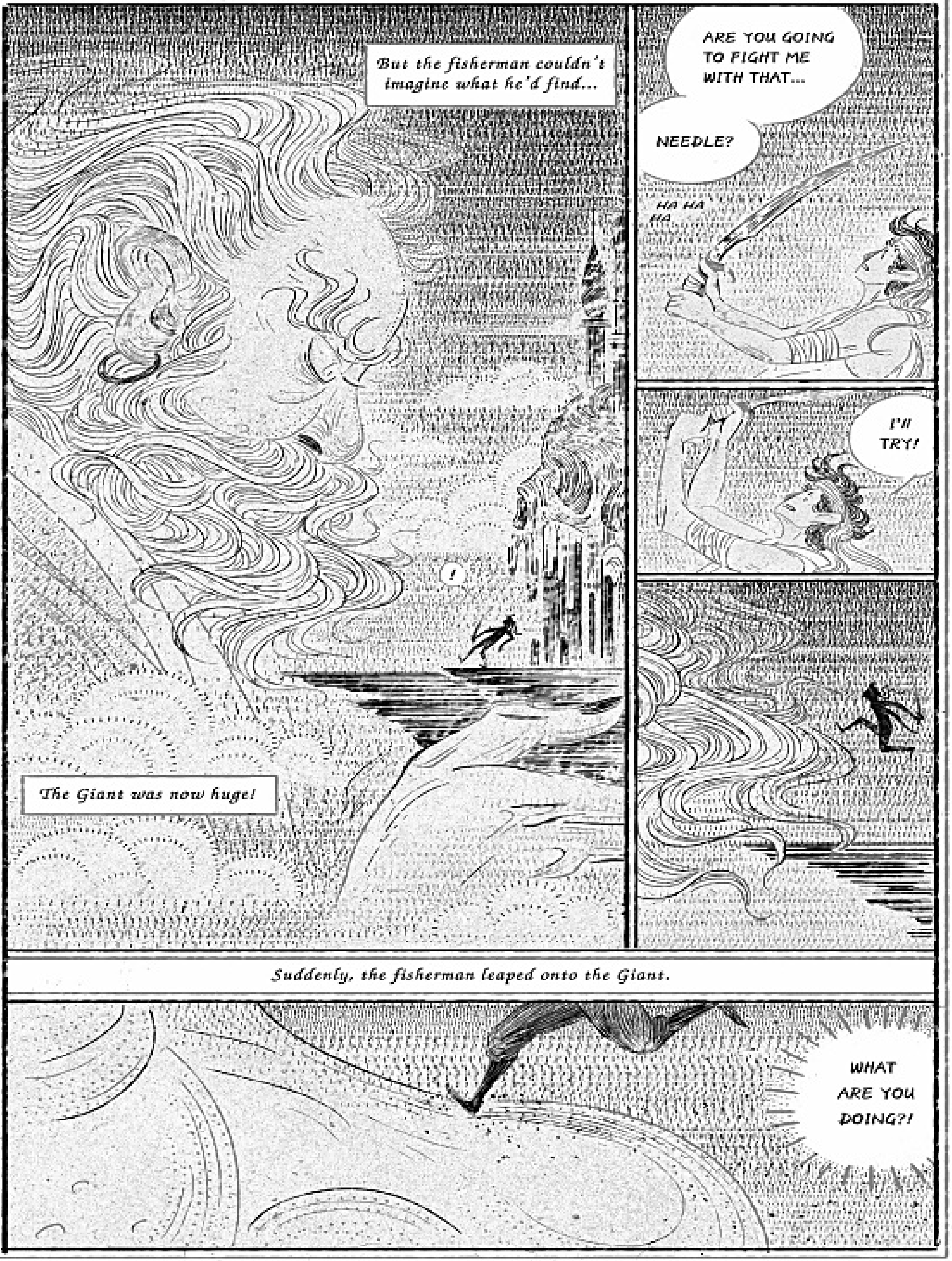

"My tears give me power.
And with that..."

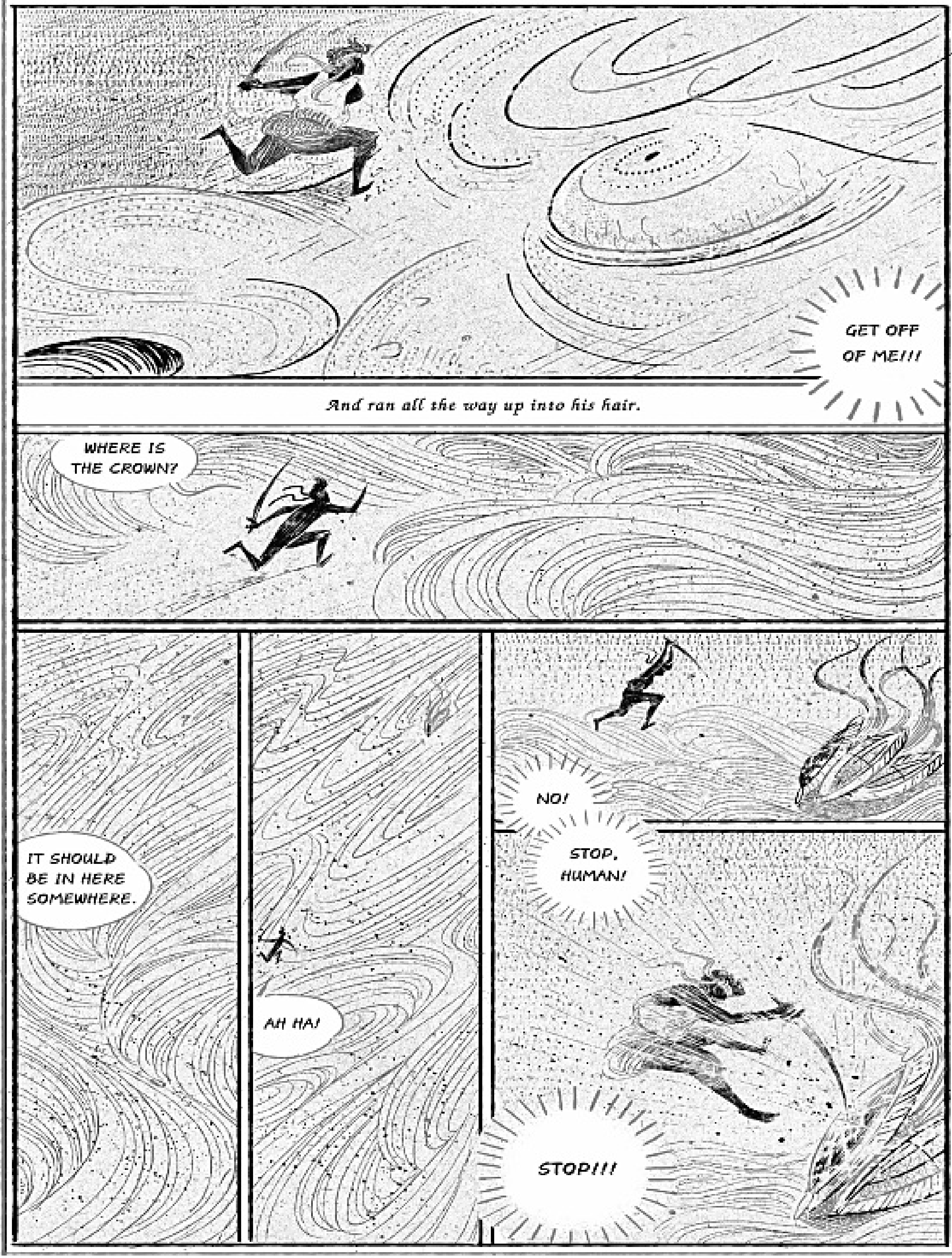

DISAPPEAR!
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
... I DECIDED TO MAKE HUMANS ....

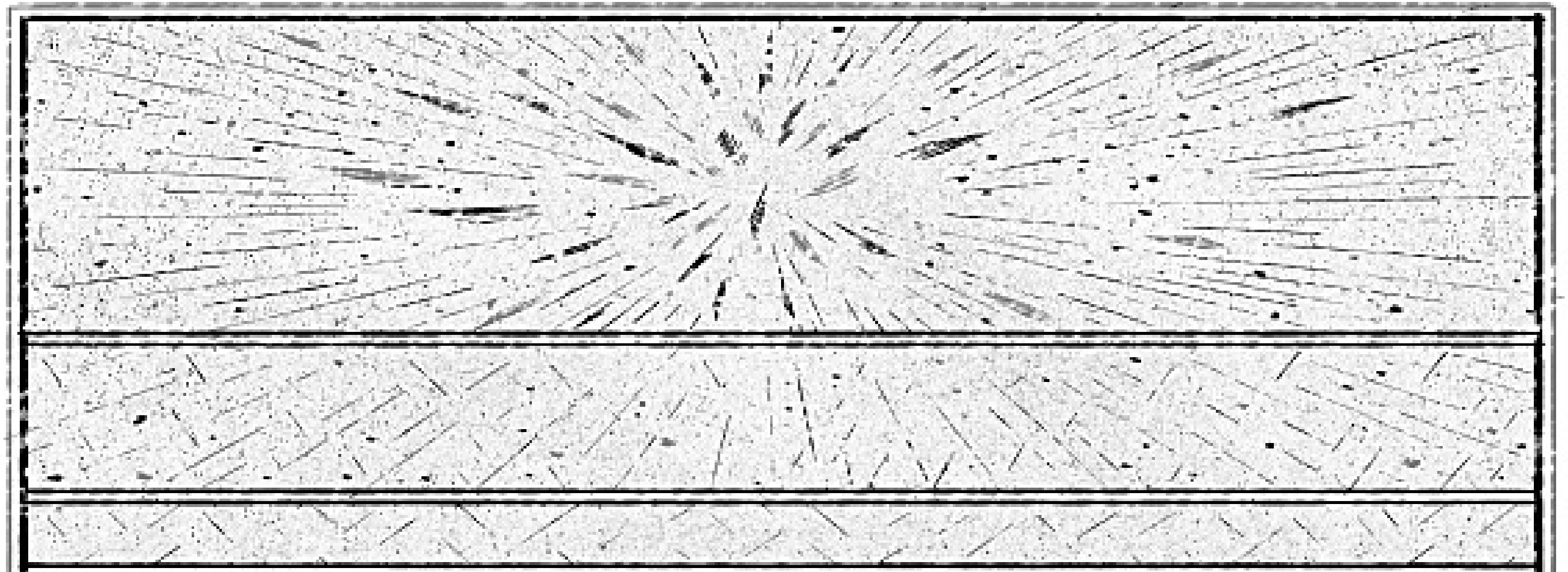

IT'S TIME!
TIME FOR... WHAT?
THE CROWN!
Suddenly, the fish jumped.
AH!
MY EYE!


A
H
H
PLOUF !
SORRY. I MISSED THE CROWN.
IT'S OKAY ...
STONE SOLDIER?
... WE CAN USE THIS!

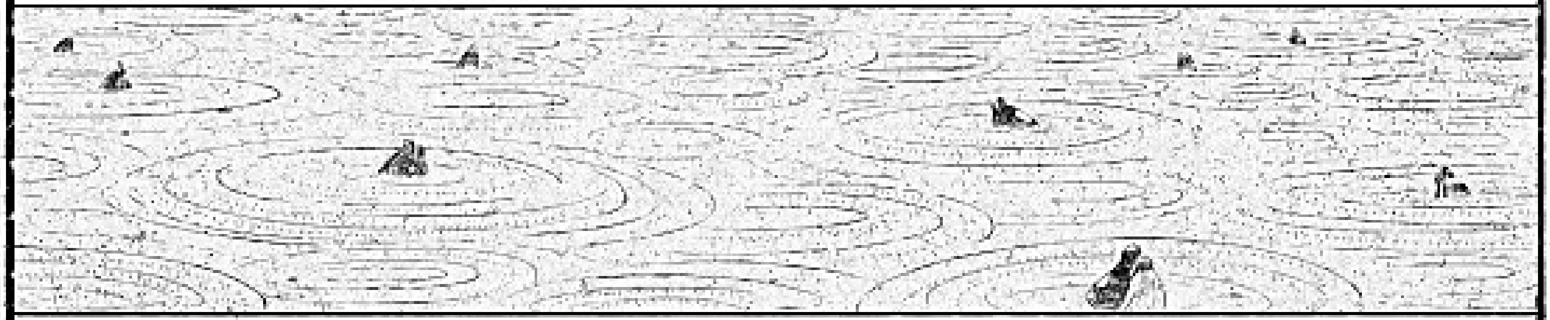
With a sword, the determined fisherman ran out to fight the King.


But the fisherman couldn't imagine what he'd find...
!
The Giant was now huge!
ARE YOU GOING TO FIGHT ME WITH THAT...
NEEDLE?
HA HA HA
I'll TRY!
Suddenly, the fisherman leaped onto the Giant.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

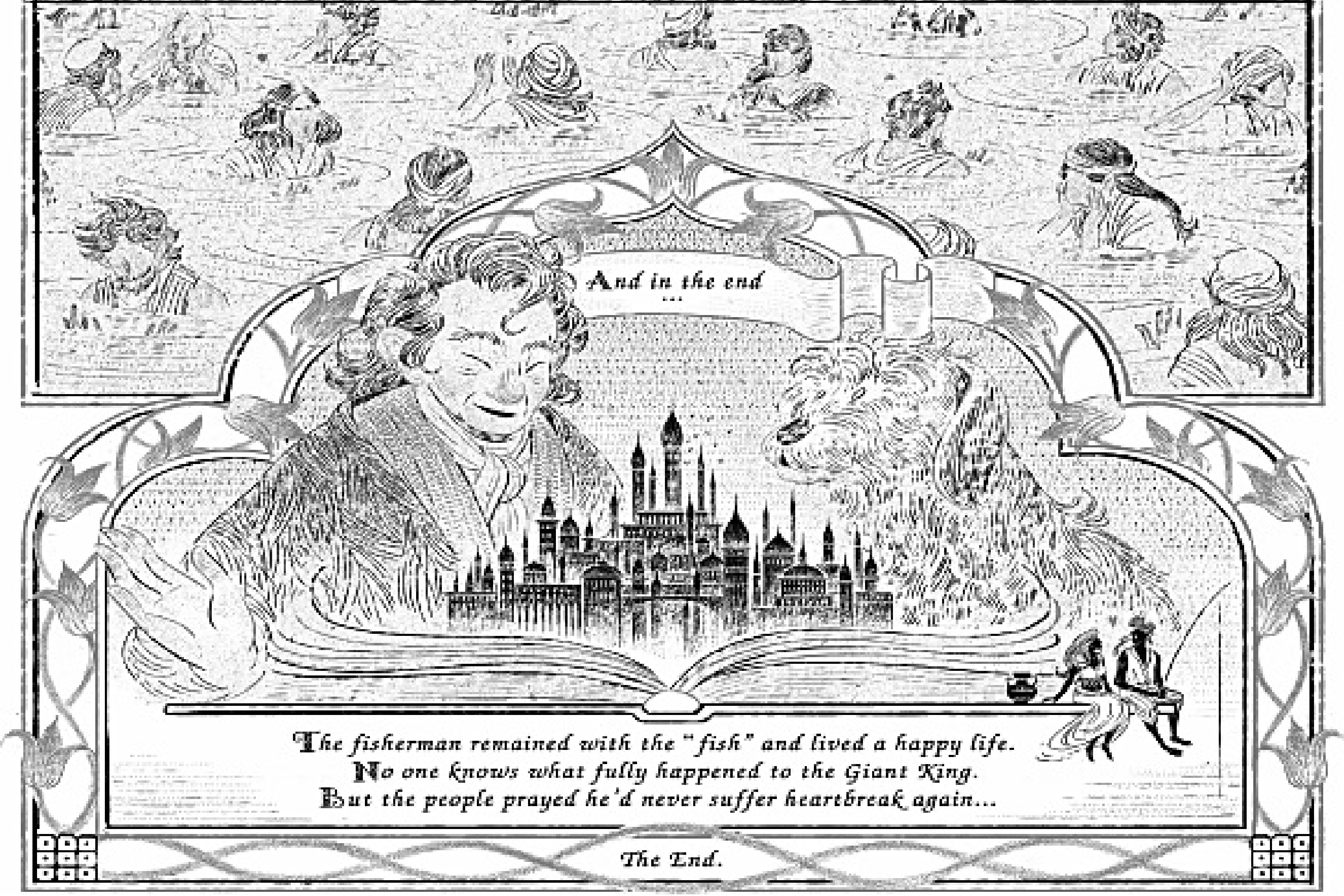

GET OFF OF ME!!!
And ran all the way up into his hair.
WHERE IS THE CROWN?
IT SHOULD BE IN HERE SOMEWHERE.
AH HA!
NO!
STOP, HUMAN!
STOP!!!



It started to rain.



And the rain washed all the magic away.



The fisherman remained with the "fish" and lived a happy life.
No one knows what fully happened to the Giant King.
But the people prayed he'd never suffer heartbreak again...

The End.

THE MAKING OF

Jim Henson's™

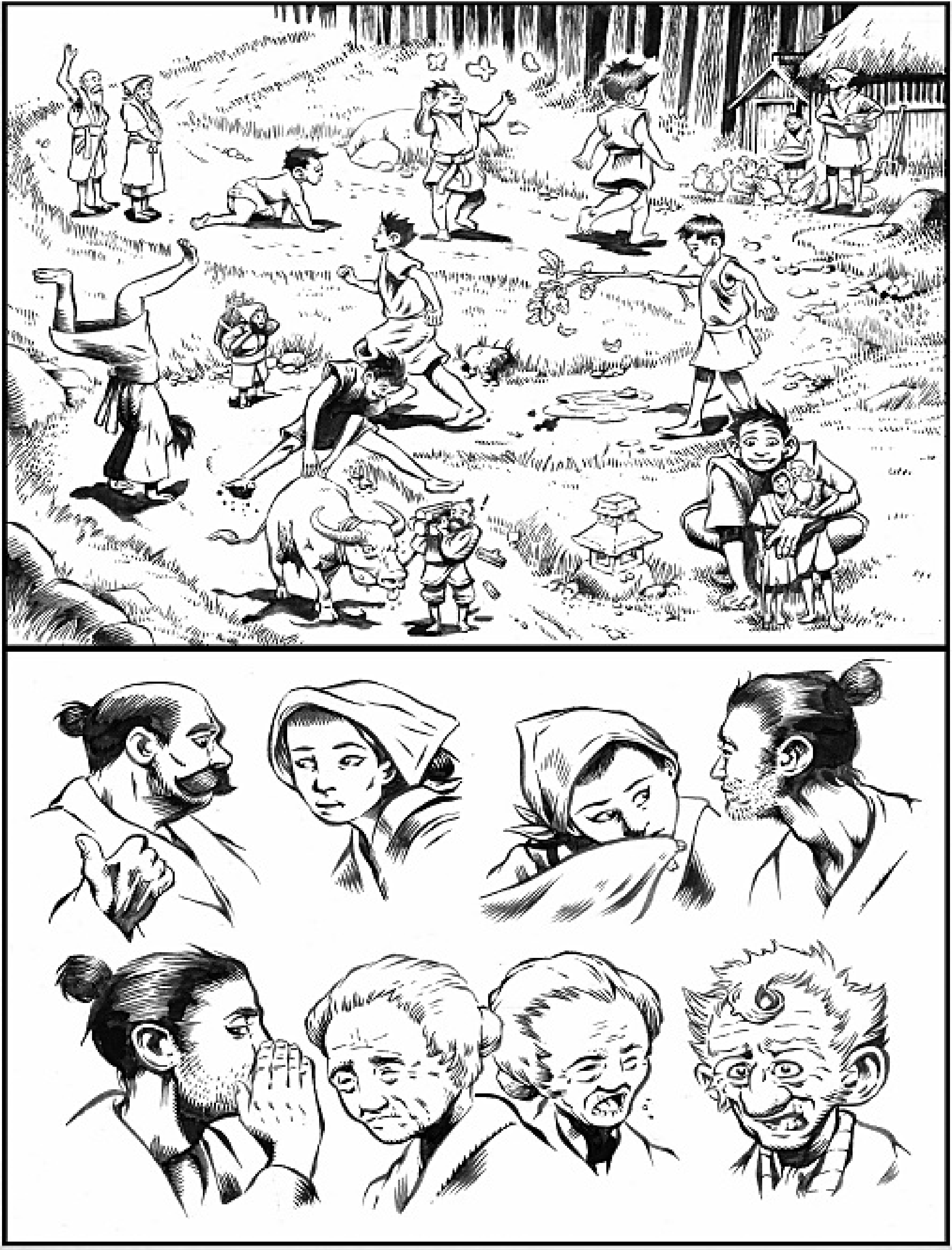
THE STORYTELLER™

Giants

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THE ART AND CRAFT OF THE STORYTELLERS AND THEIR TALES.

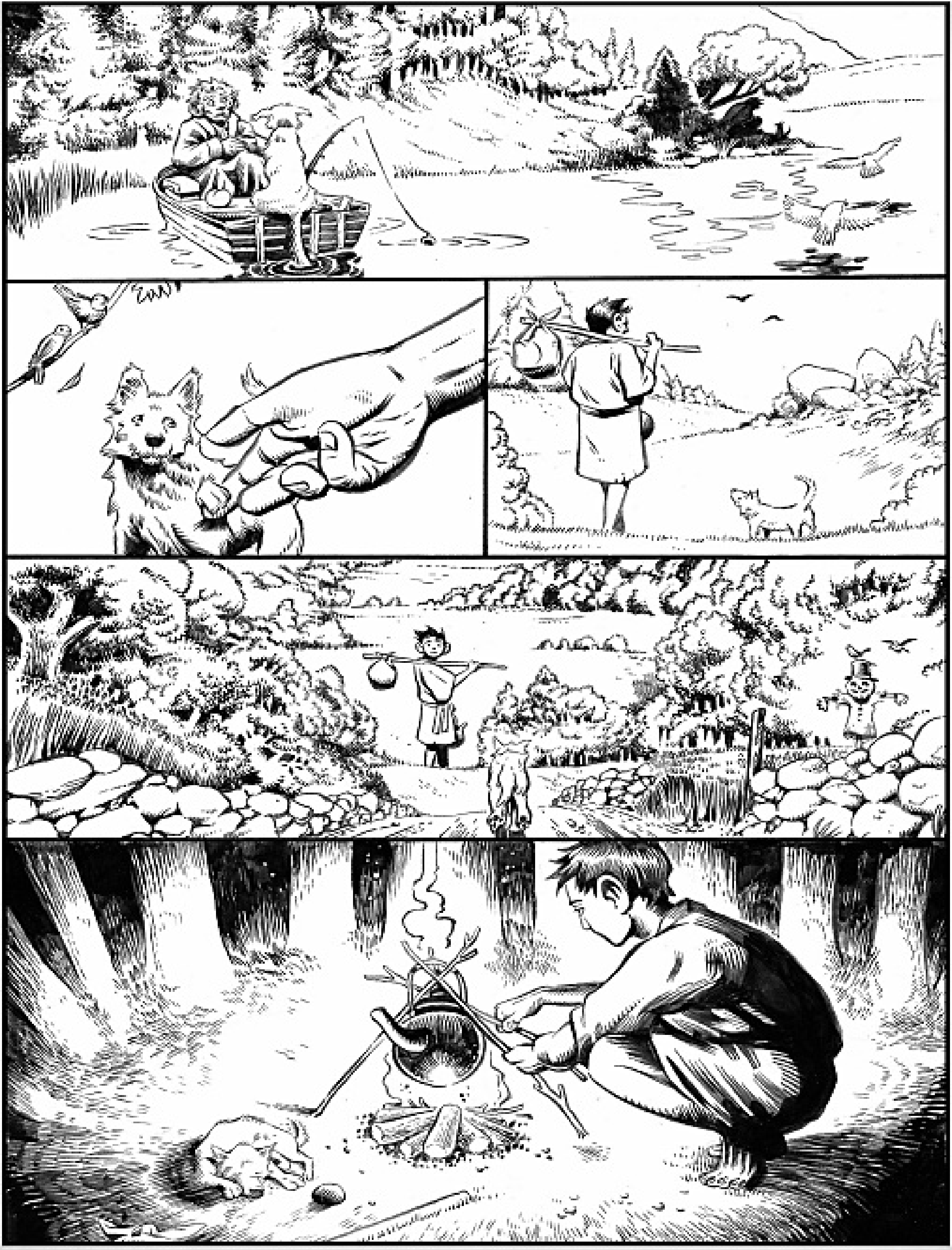
With Art and Commentary by

Conor Nolan
Brandon Dayton
Jared Cullum
Feifei Ruan



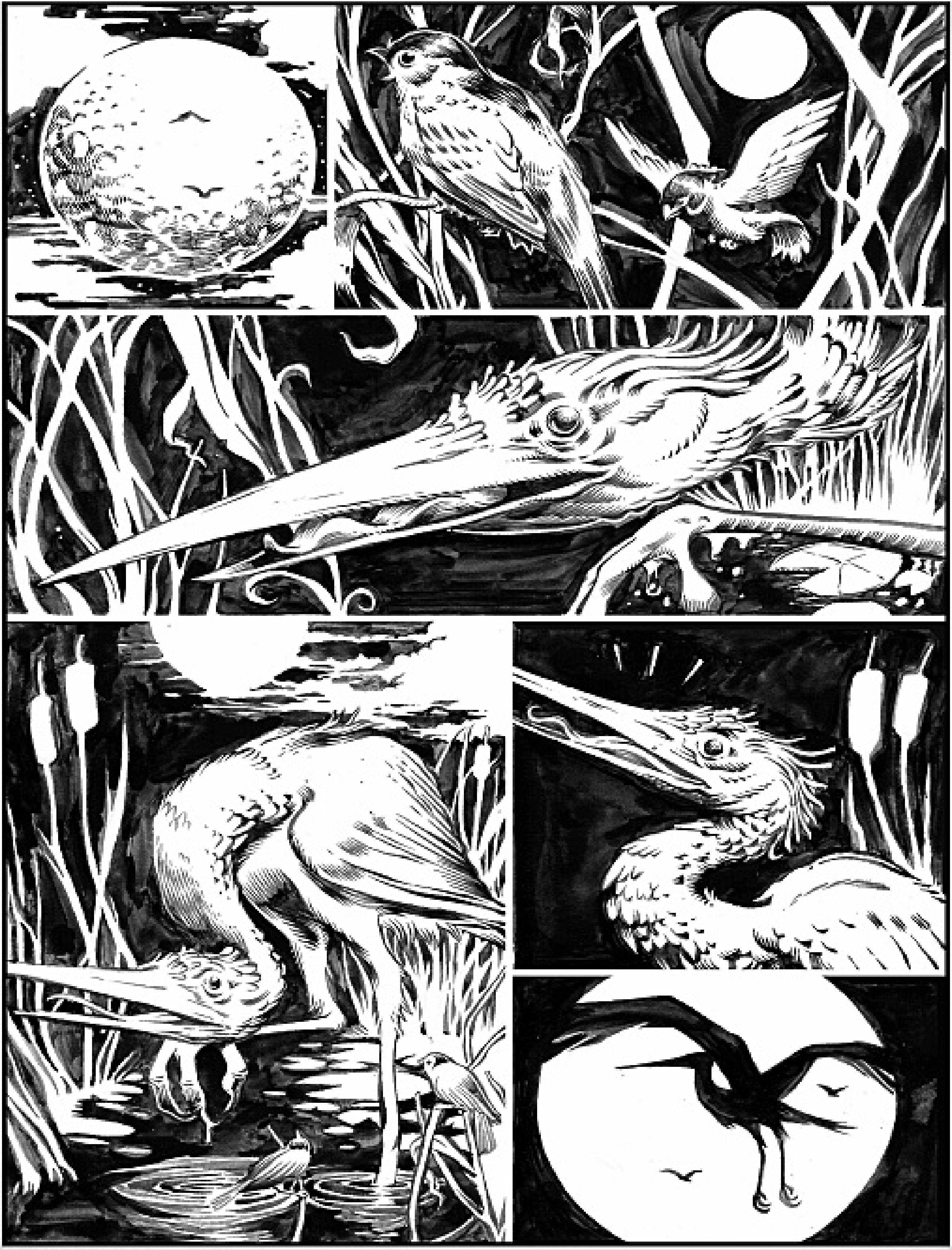
Tale One Art by Conor Nolan

Conor Nolan Commentary: A lot of information had to fit on this page. One half had to capture the passing of time, while the other, the passing of information. I wanted the reader to comfortably follow the page downward, therefore I tried to establish a relatively obvious route for the eyes to take. Additionally, the bottom panel pays homage to Norman Rockwell's "The Gossips", 1948.



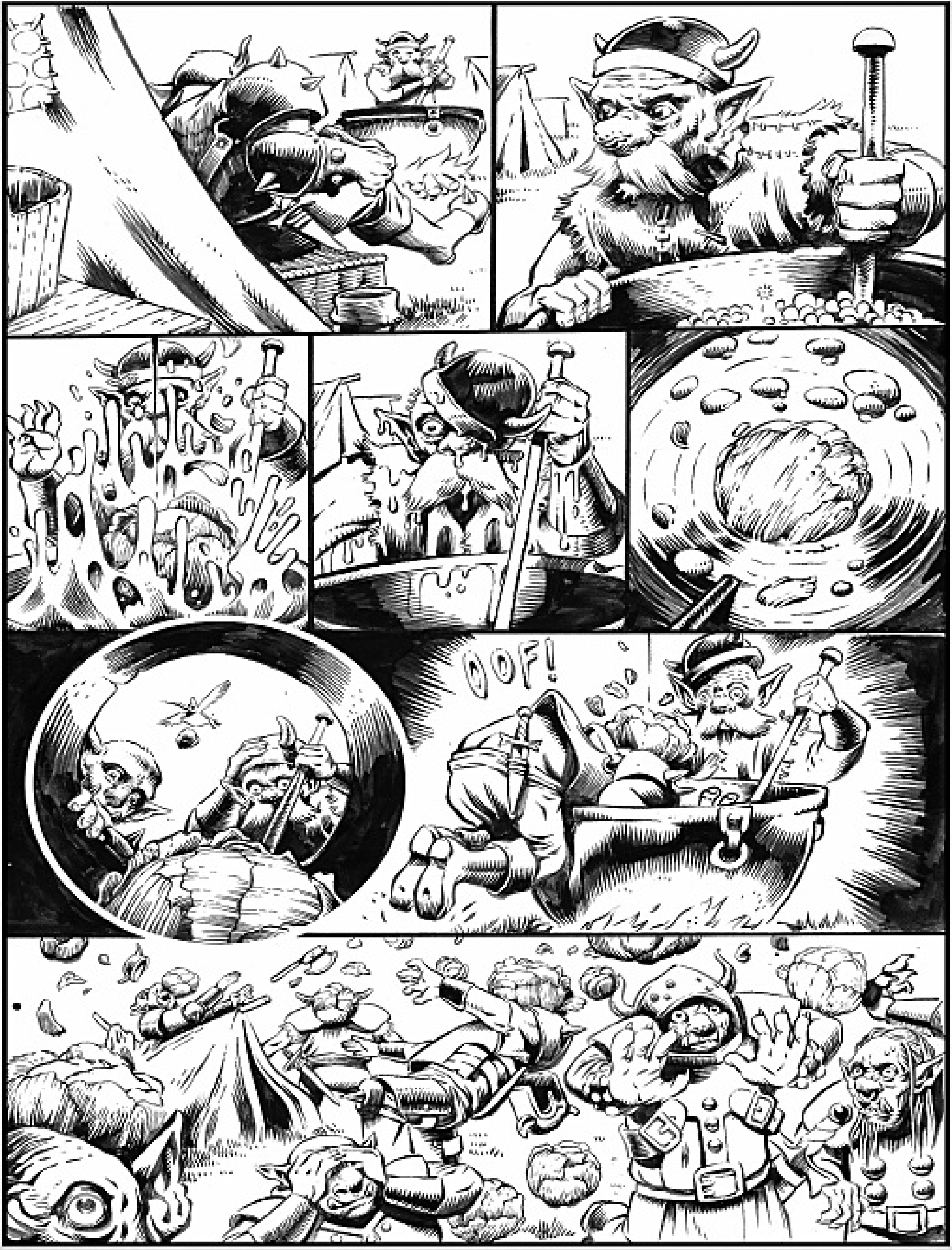
Tale One Art by Conor Nolan

CN: It was always my intention to stick the Storyteller and Dog character strategically into the story. The purpose being to break up the story and remind the reader that they're being told this tale by a narrator. With that taken care of in the first panel, the challenge for the rest of the page was to fit a character of large size with a small character into the same panel.



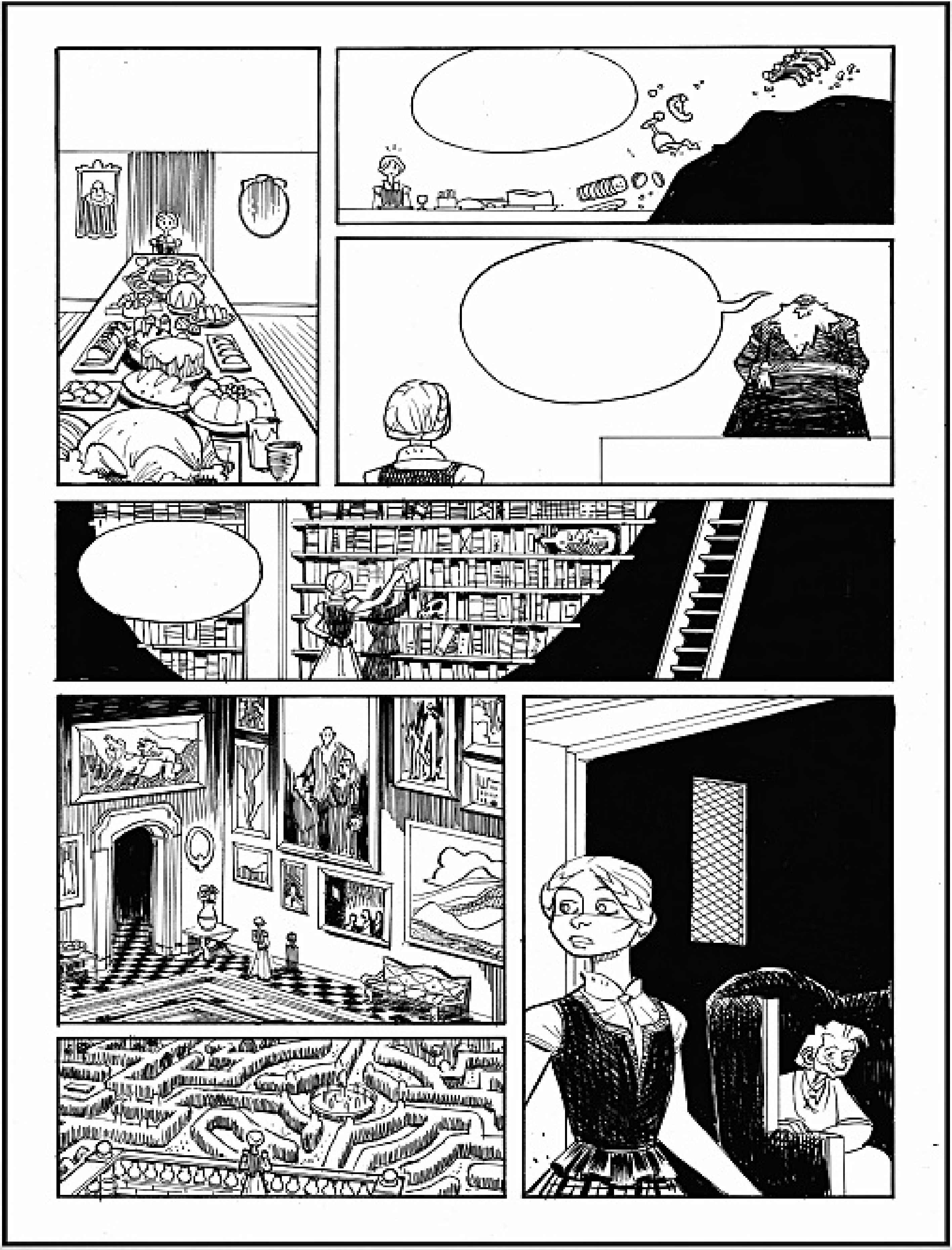
Tale One Art by Conor Nolan

CN: This was perhaps my favorite page to ink. Initially, I wanted the Heron character to come off as intimidating: a large beak and talons visible by moonlight, and sparrow minions to serve him. My aim was for his introduction to show him as powerful, rather than overly frightening.



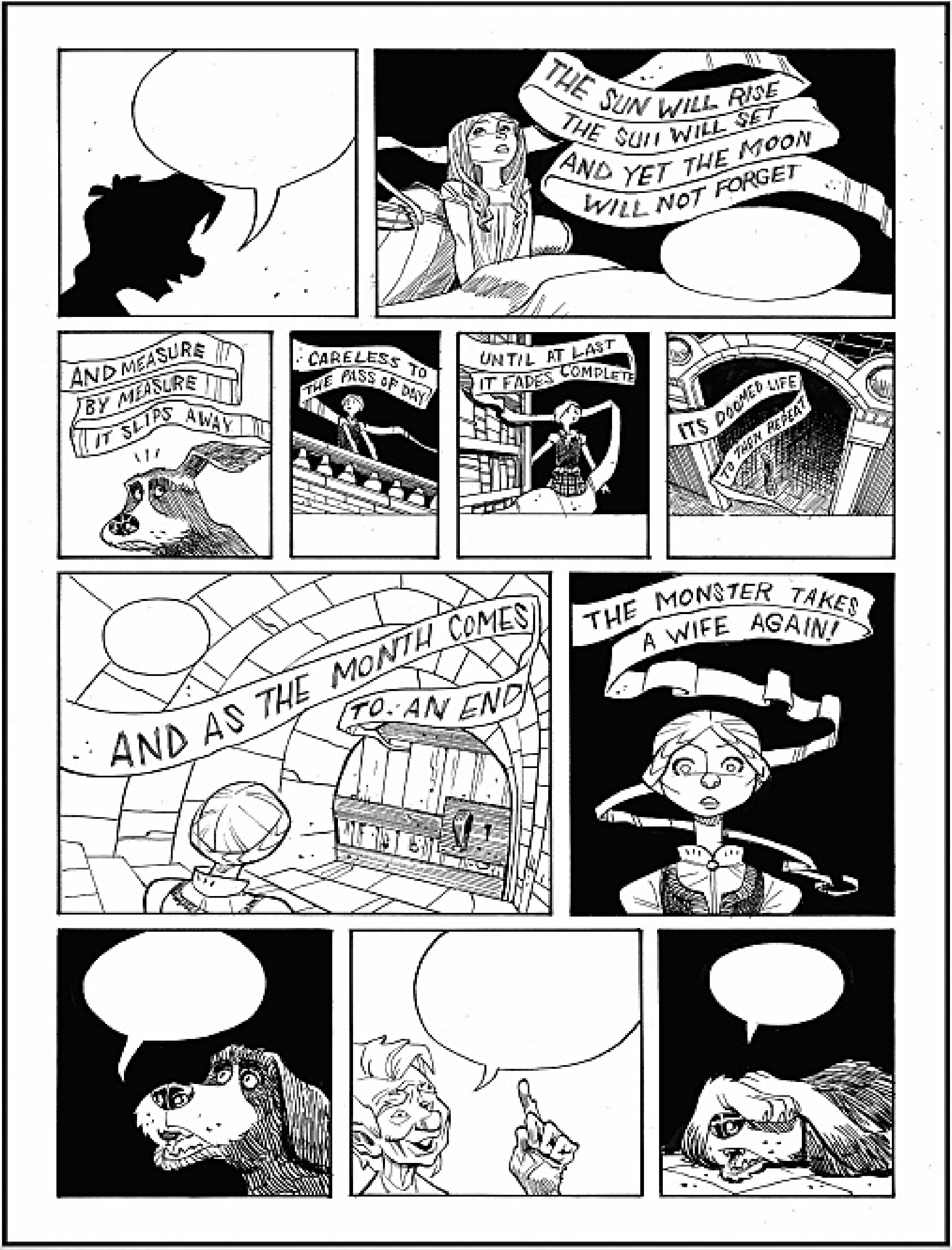
Tale One Art by Conor Nolan

CN: Having been a fan of Jim Henson's work since childhood, I approached this page by asking myself how he might have shown it. After putting together an idea I worked on the challenge of pulling the viewer in and out of the cauldron by repeating the circular vignettes.



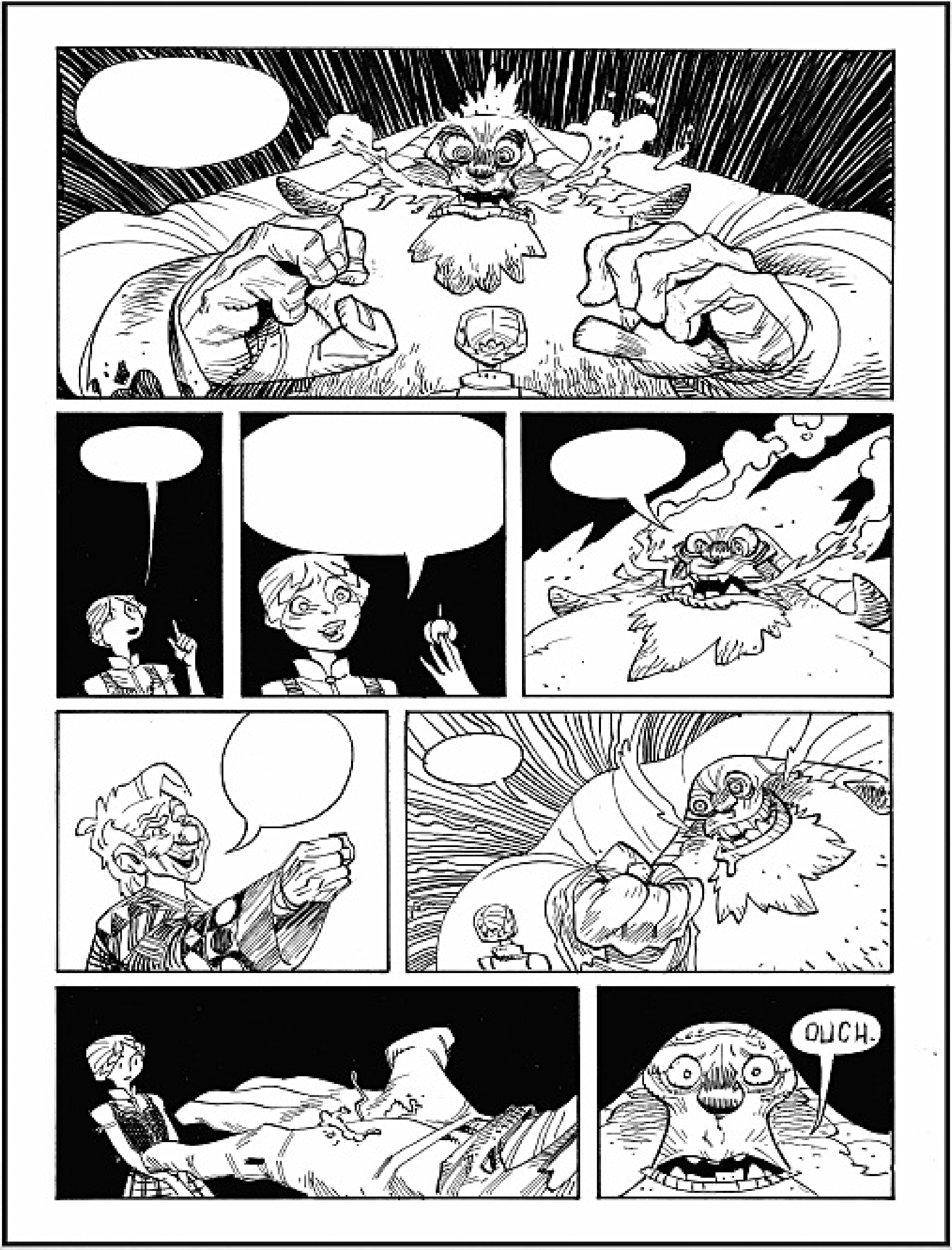
Tale Two Art by Brandon Dayton

Brandon Dayton Commentary: I tried to take every opportunity in this book to show the vastness of the castle, but at the same time show how trapped and alone our hero is. So it had to feel big but claustrophobic at the same time (oxymoron much?). Low angles and wide angle shots are great to show scale, but in this particular case, I felt like a high angle and more of a telephoto feel made the setting feel more oppressive. To get the sense of scale I tried to show as many different settings within the castle as possible.


THE SUN WILL RISE
THE SUN WILL SET
AND YET THE MOON
WILL NOT FORGET
AND MEASURE BY MEASURE
IT SLIPS AWAY
CARELESS TO THE PASS OF DAY
UNTIL AT LAST IT FADES COMPLETE
ITS DOOMED LIFE TO THEN REPEAT
AND AS THE MONTH COMES
TO AN END
THE MONSTER TAKES A WIFE AGAIN!

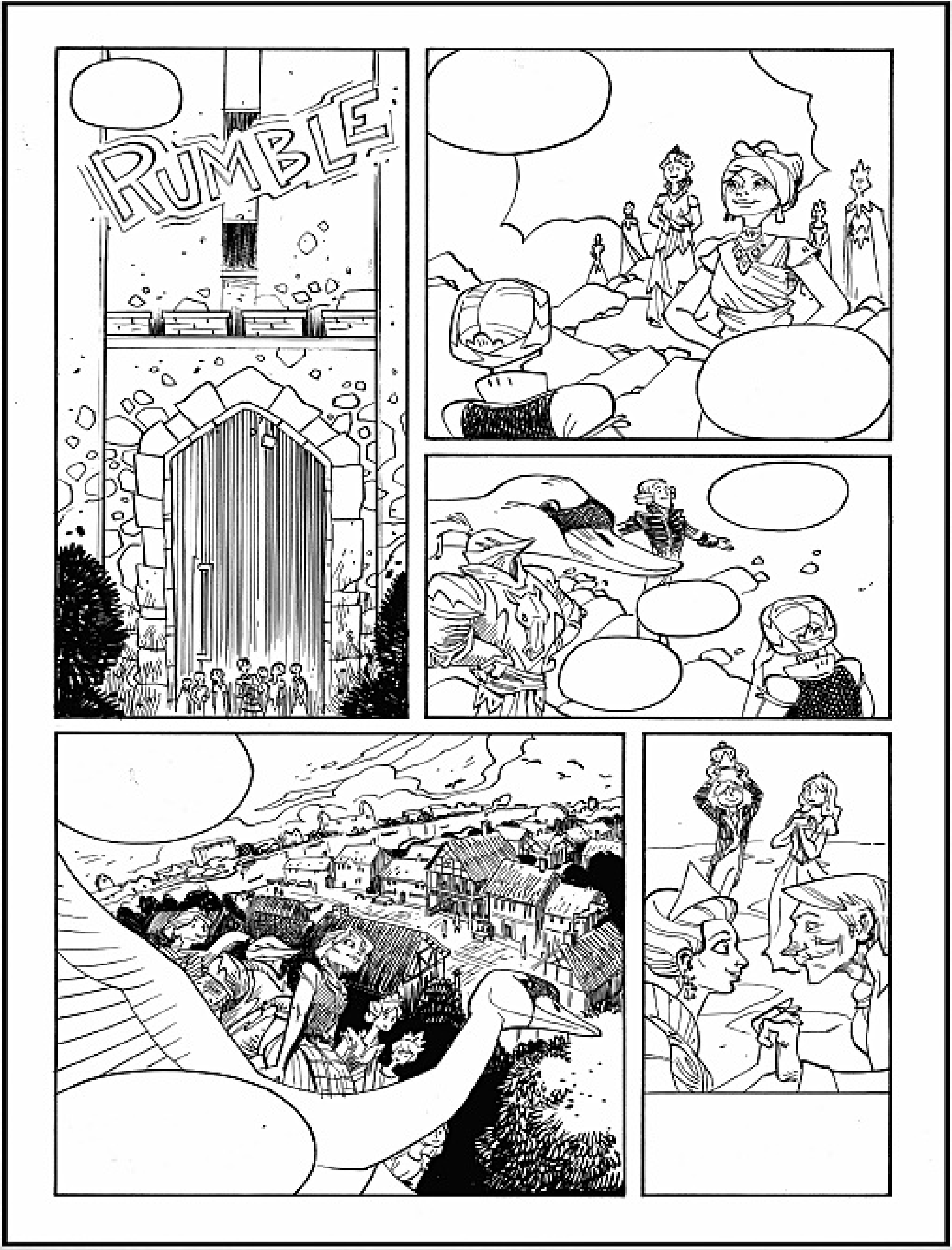
Tale Two Art by Brandon Dayton

BD: One of things you find when you are telling a story with a narrator is that it can be easy to get redundant. The narrator might tell you something that is communicated in other ways on the page. I found myself doing this on several occasions throughout this book and in most cases I removed the redundancy. For example: I almost added little notes to the song until I realized that it wasn't necessary. It allowed me to focus a bit more on the experience of song, rather than beating the reader over the head that it's music.



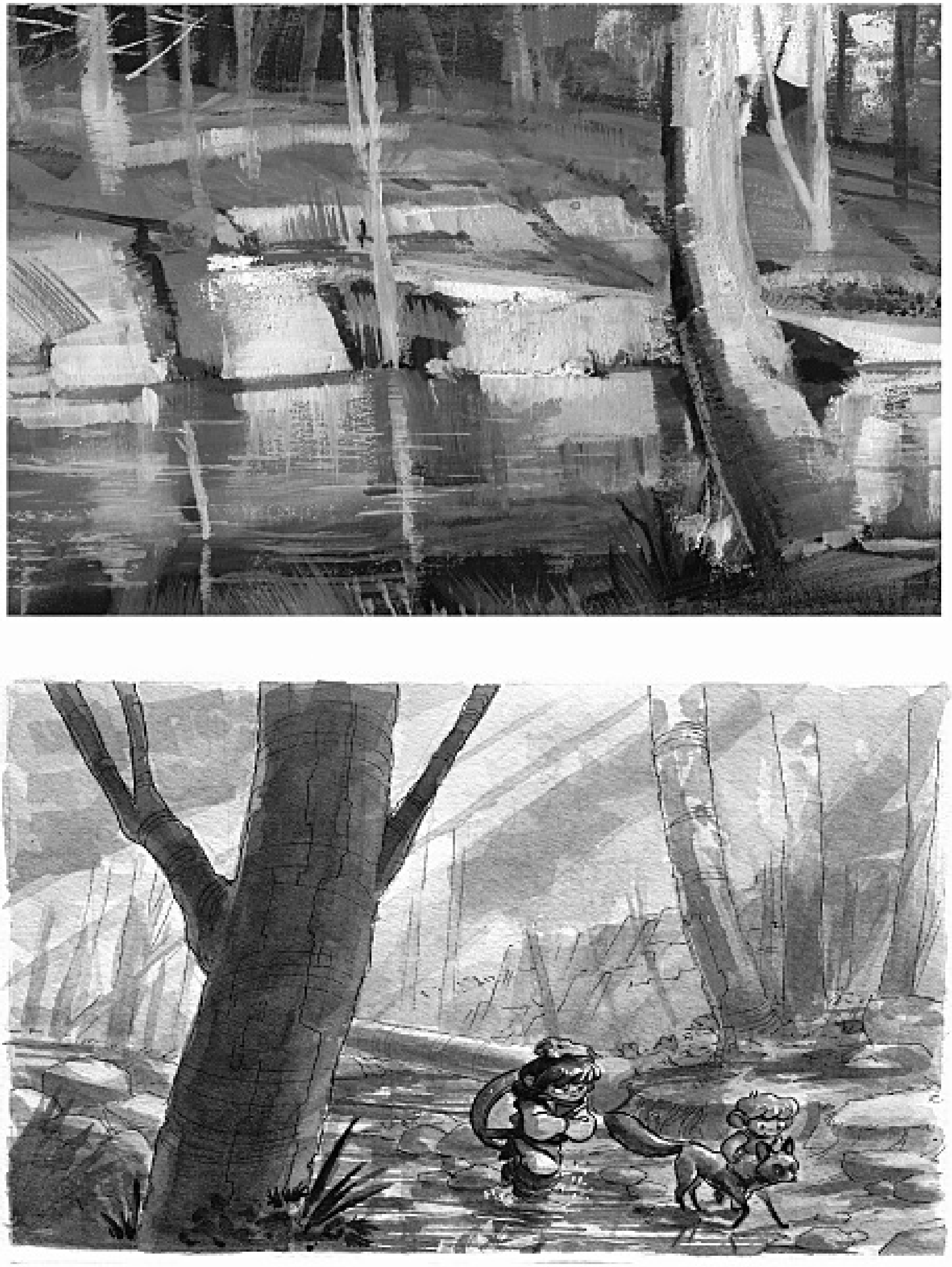
Tale Two Art by Brandon Dayton

BD: I loved the old illustrations I stumbled on while studying fairytales. As artists, it's easy to get caught up in the cliches that are particular to our time. It's refreshing to go back and see what artists produced when working under different assumptions. One illustration in particular by H.J. Ford in *The Pink Fairy Book* depicted a giant with smoke and flames coming out of his nose and mouth. I thought a detail like that would work great in the Giant's climactic moment of anger.



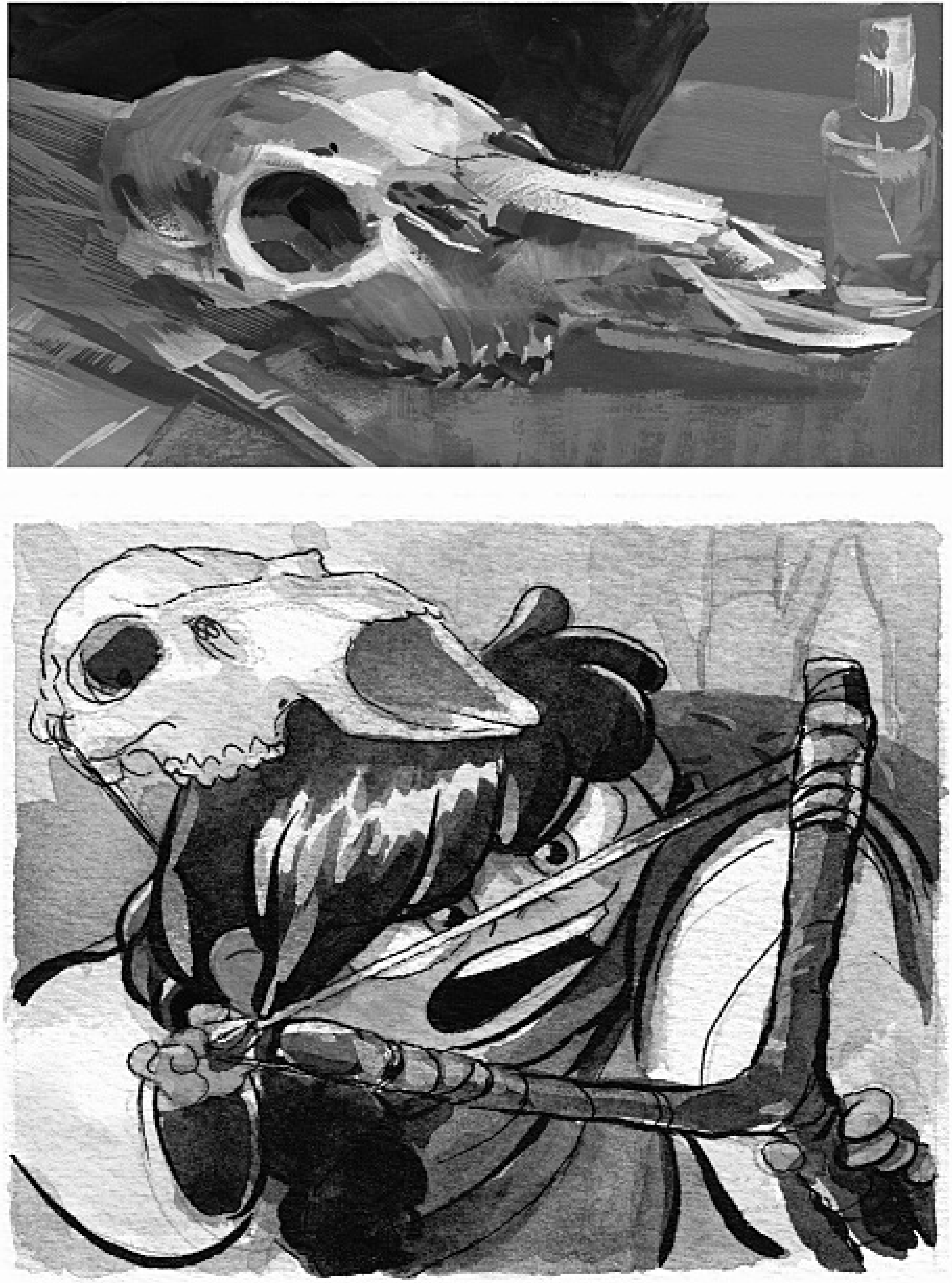
Tale Two Art by Brandon Dayton

BD: Panel four, where they're all riding on the swan, was the most important panel of this page. Most of the other panels are necessary just to communicate information, but panel four is more about our hero celebrating freedom after being trapped for the last fourteen pages. If I could have, I would have made it a splash page.



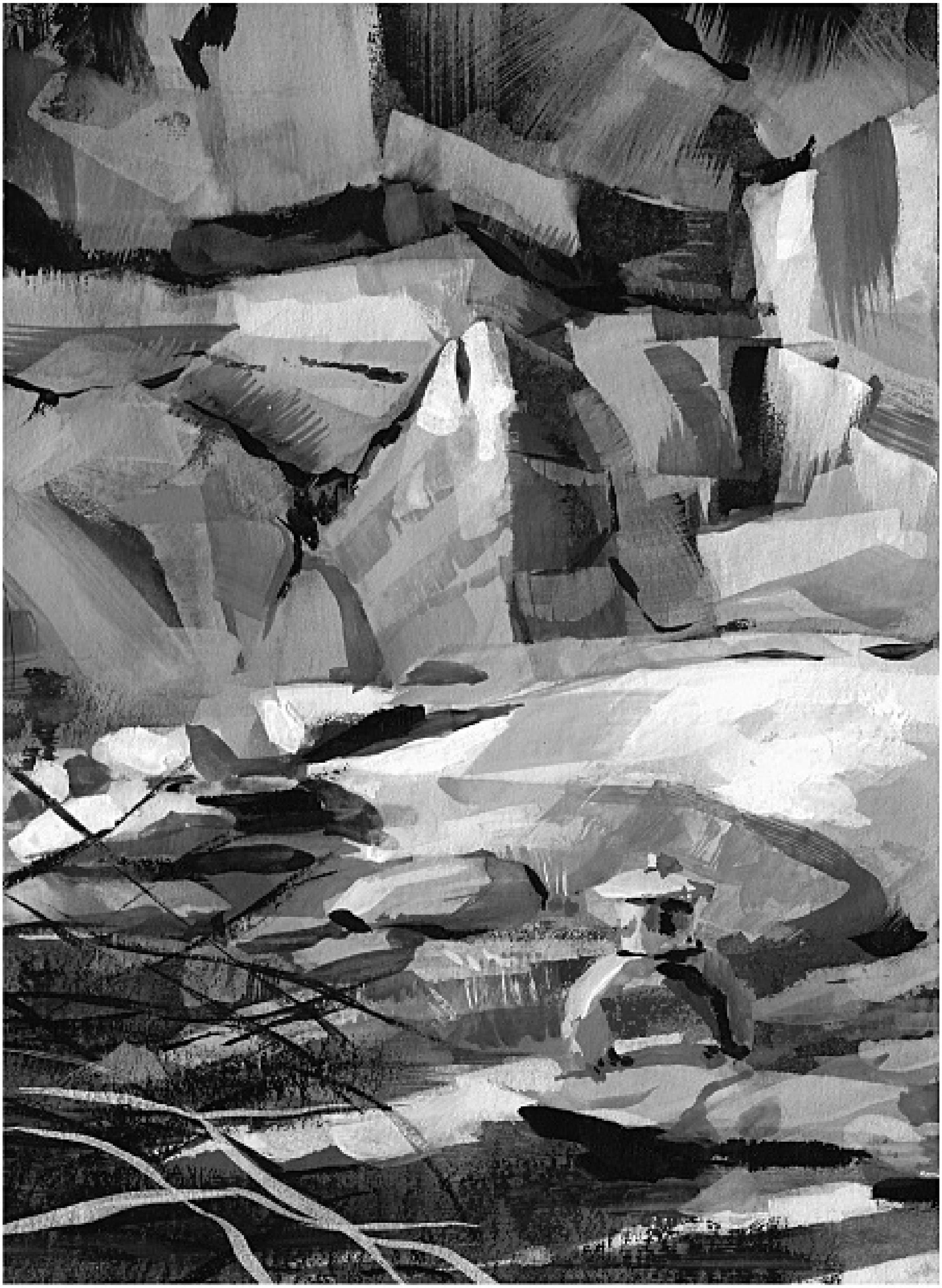
Tale Three Art and Process Painting by Jared Cullum; Maymont Park Bear Enclosure

Jared Cullum Commentary: I carry watercolor gear everywhere to attempt to capture scenes I can bring home to comics. Because I work emotionally and visually, a large portion of my story writing takes place in observational sketches. When painting a sunset I don't just see grass and atmosphere. I hear my son's laughter and see my wife and daughter's faces and feel the flood of emotions that come with that. My dream is to imbue my comic environments with just a modicum of how landscape sketching make me feel.



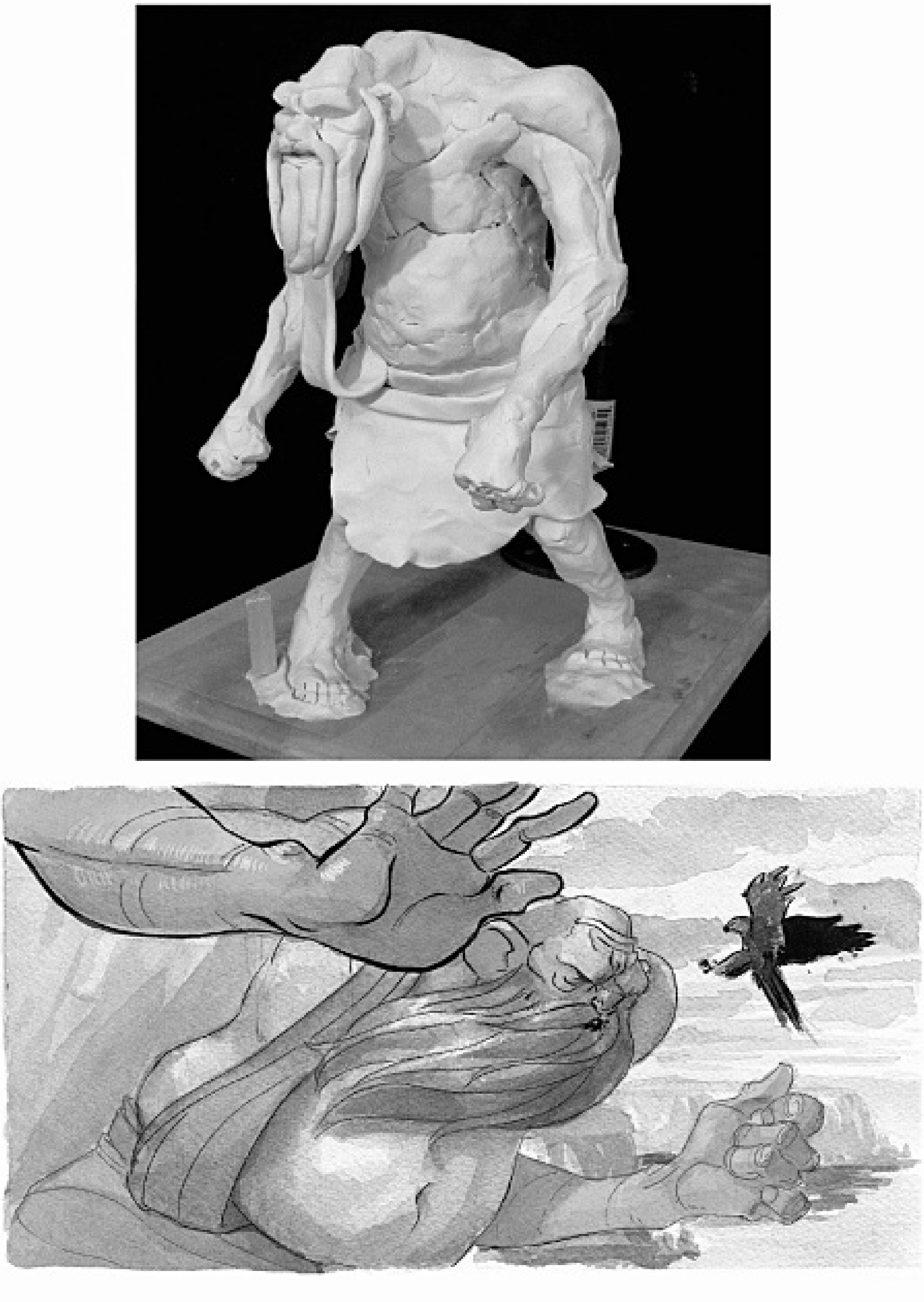
Tale Three Art and Process Painting by Jared Cullum

JC: One of my favorite things to study is skeletal anatomy. I collect skulls for teaching and constantly go back to studying the foundation of form on muscles and bones. The deer skull was processed and given to me by a local hunter. This piece was done with gouache paint, which is opaque watercolor.



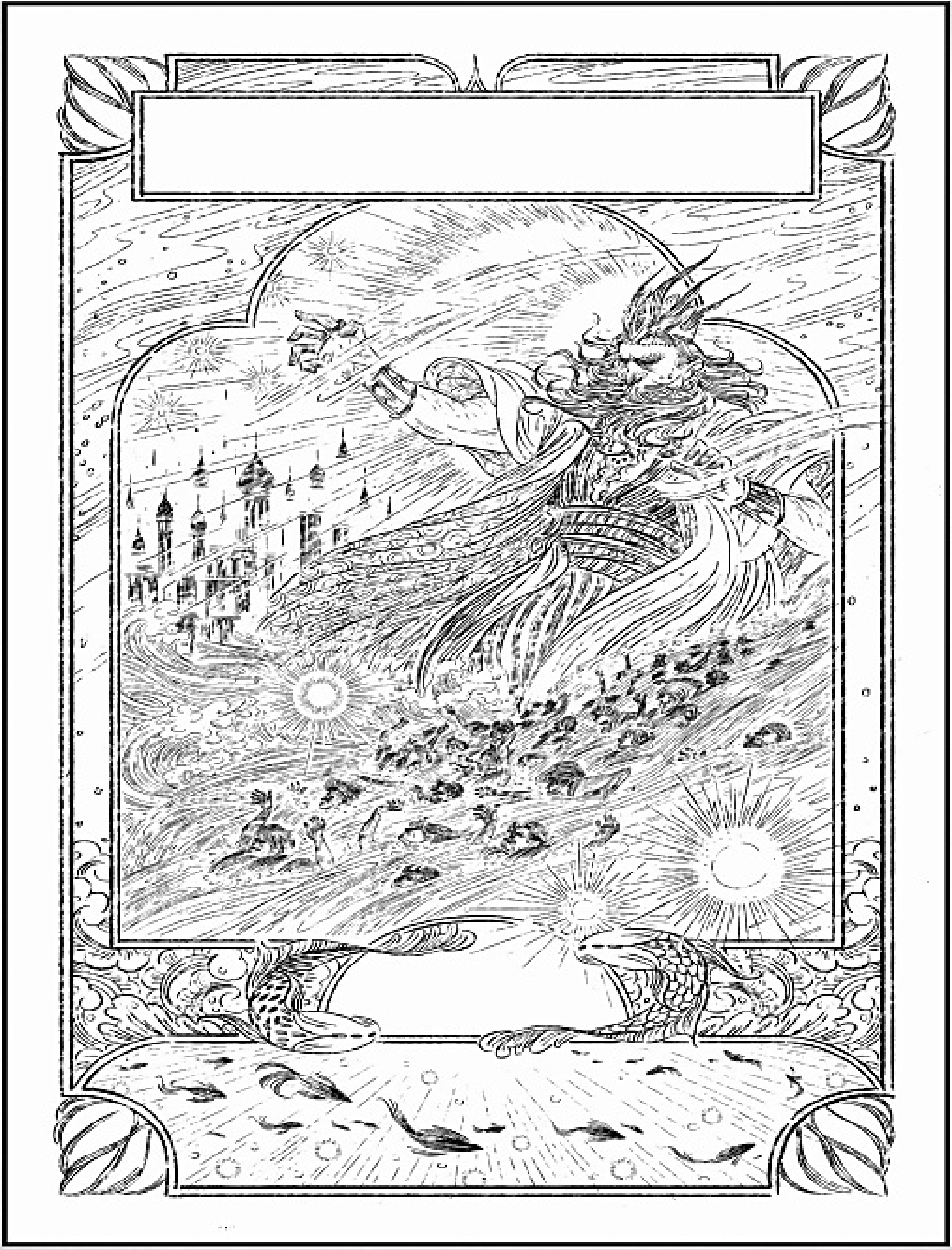
Tale Three Process Painting by Jared Cullum; Japanese Garden, Maymont, Richmond, VA

JC: This is a spot I like to go back to from time to time to sketch in different lighting or time of day. Planning how to light a scene plays a big part in my storytelling. The warmth or coolness of a lit scene or the time of day can evoke feelings that help carry a story subconsciously. Everywhere I go I try to make mental notes about the reflective light or color character of shadows I observe and how they make me feel.



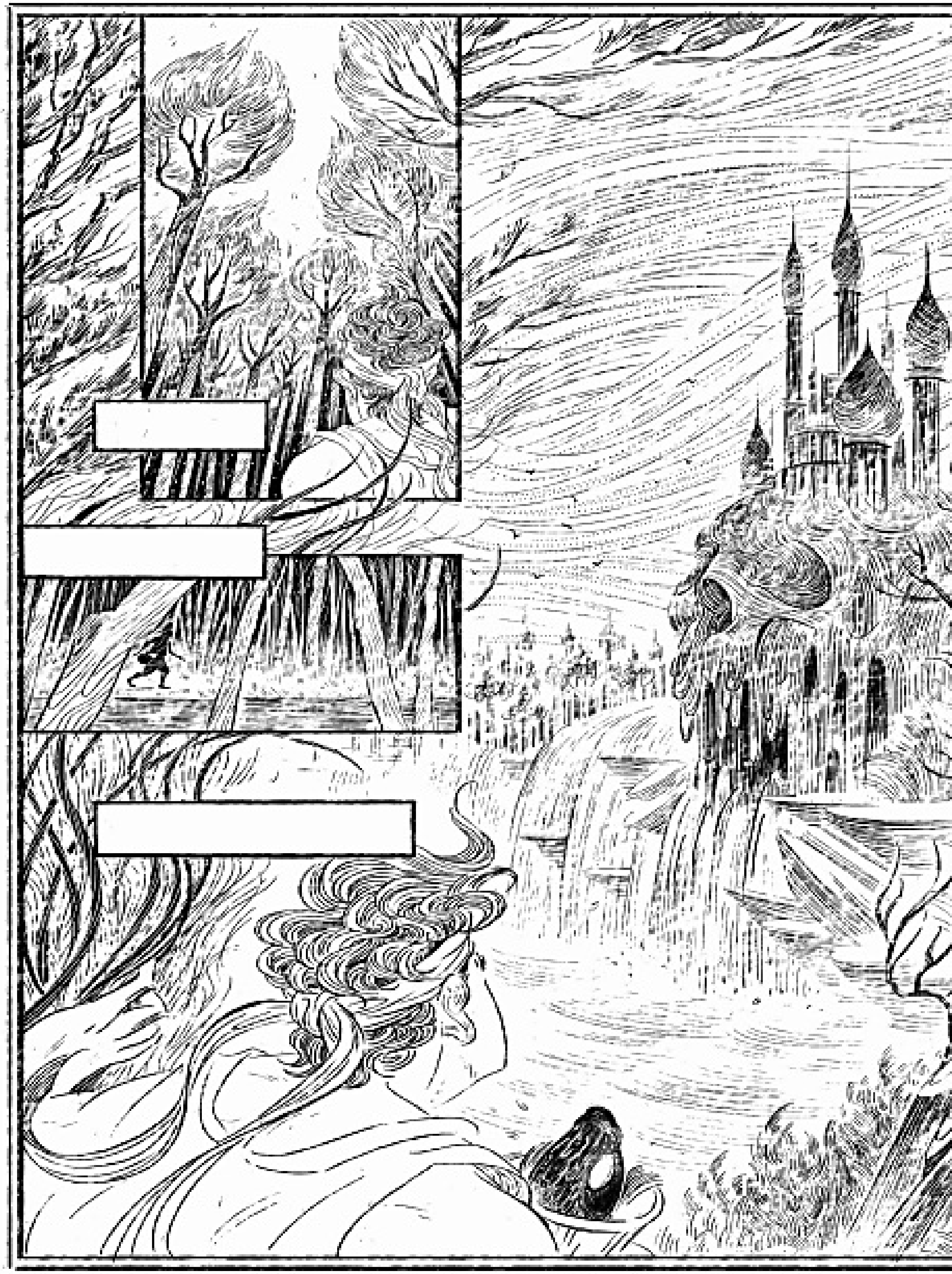
Tale Three Art and Process Sculpture by Jared Cullum

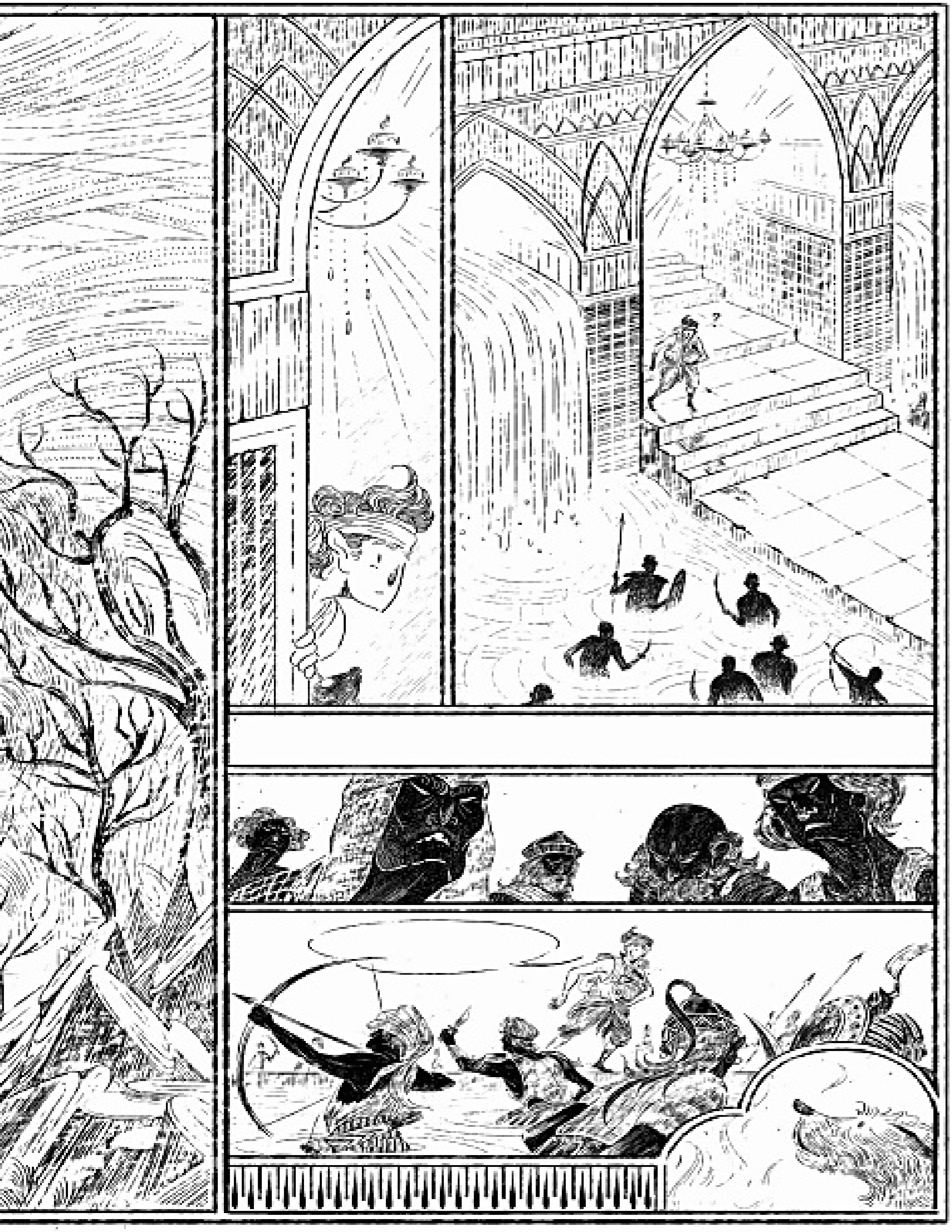
JC: Studying anatomy gives me a chance to understand the walk and movement of a character and to add elements by combining various animal structural form. The giant in this comic combined sketches of early humans, elephants, and the crested skull of a gorilla. I constructed a 17" moveable clay sculpture to observe anatomy, form and reflected light. I combined that information with observations in atmospheric perspective to create a sense of scale and depth.



Tale Four Art by Feifei Ruan

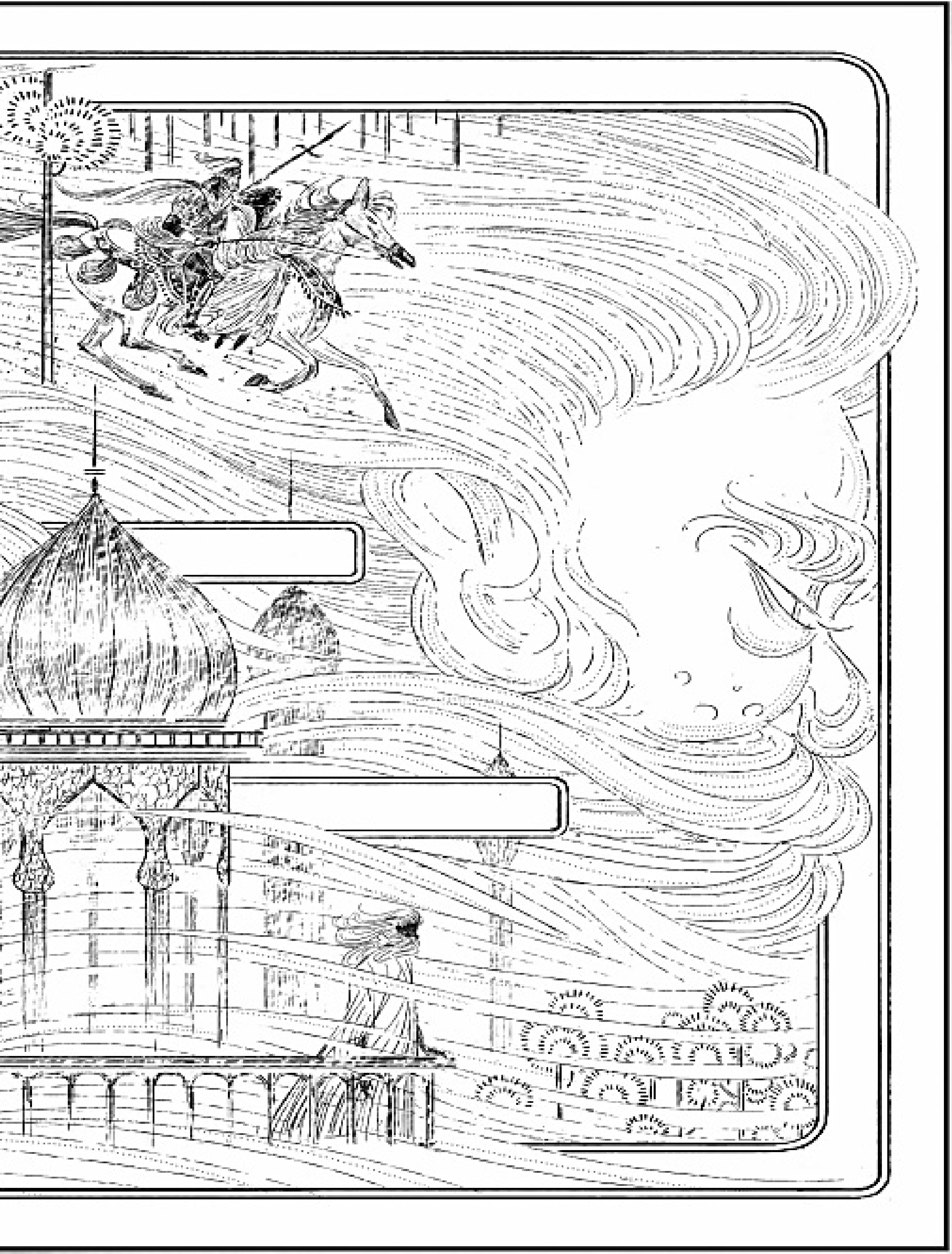
Feifei Ruan Commentary: I wanted this flashback to feel as old as possible and for the Giant King to appear extremely powerful. I used an ancient styled frame design and also made the Giant oversized, spilling out of the panel's frame.





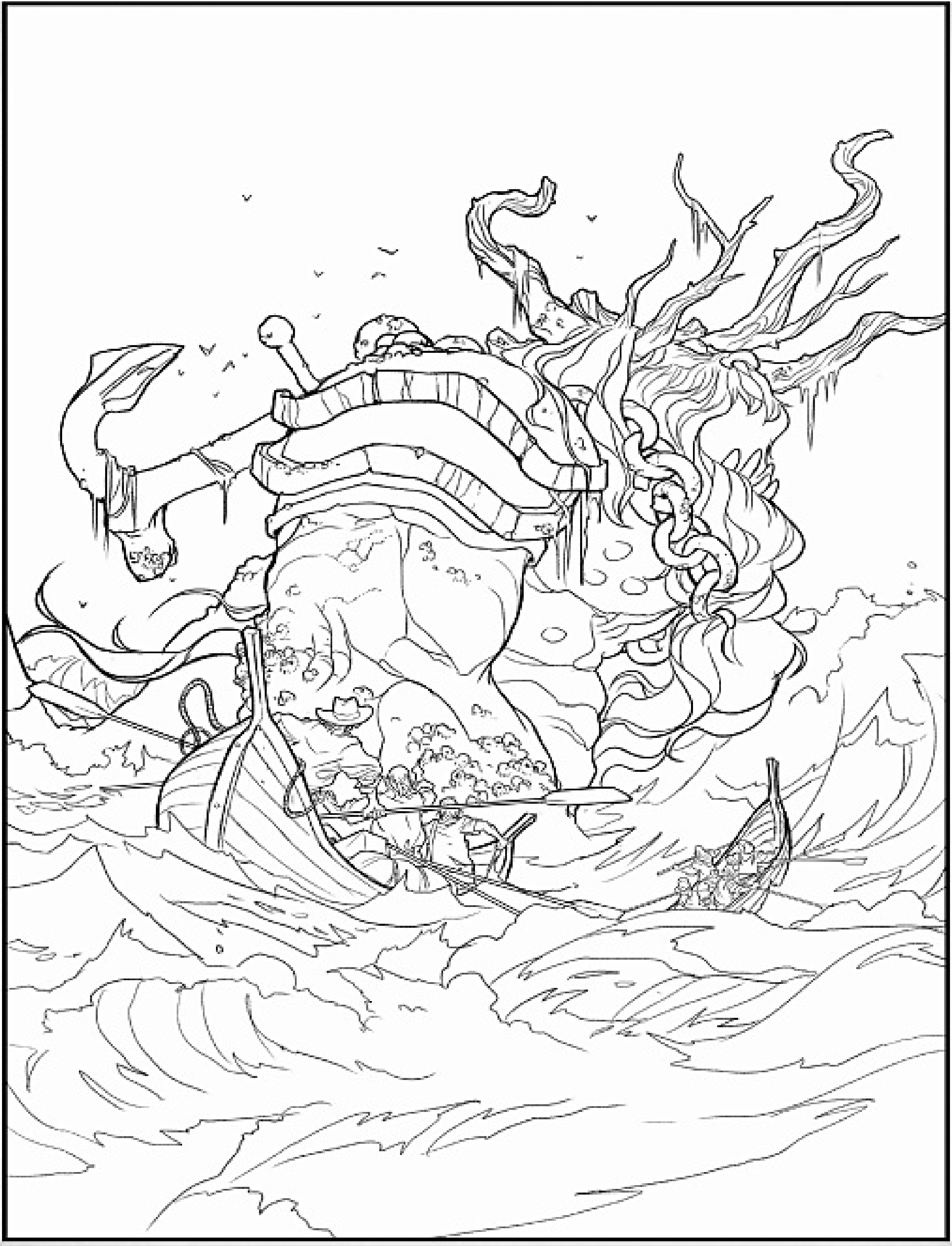
Tale Four Art by Feifei Ruan

FR: To accent the mysterious wind, I let the panels float aside the panels. For the sequence, I also spread the palace into the right hand page to increase the visual impact of the reveal.



Tale Four Art by Feifei Ruan

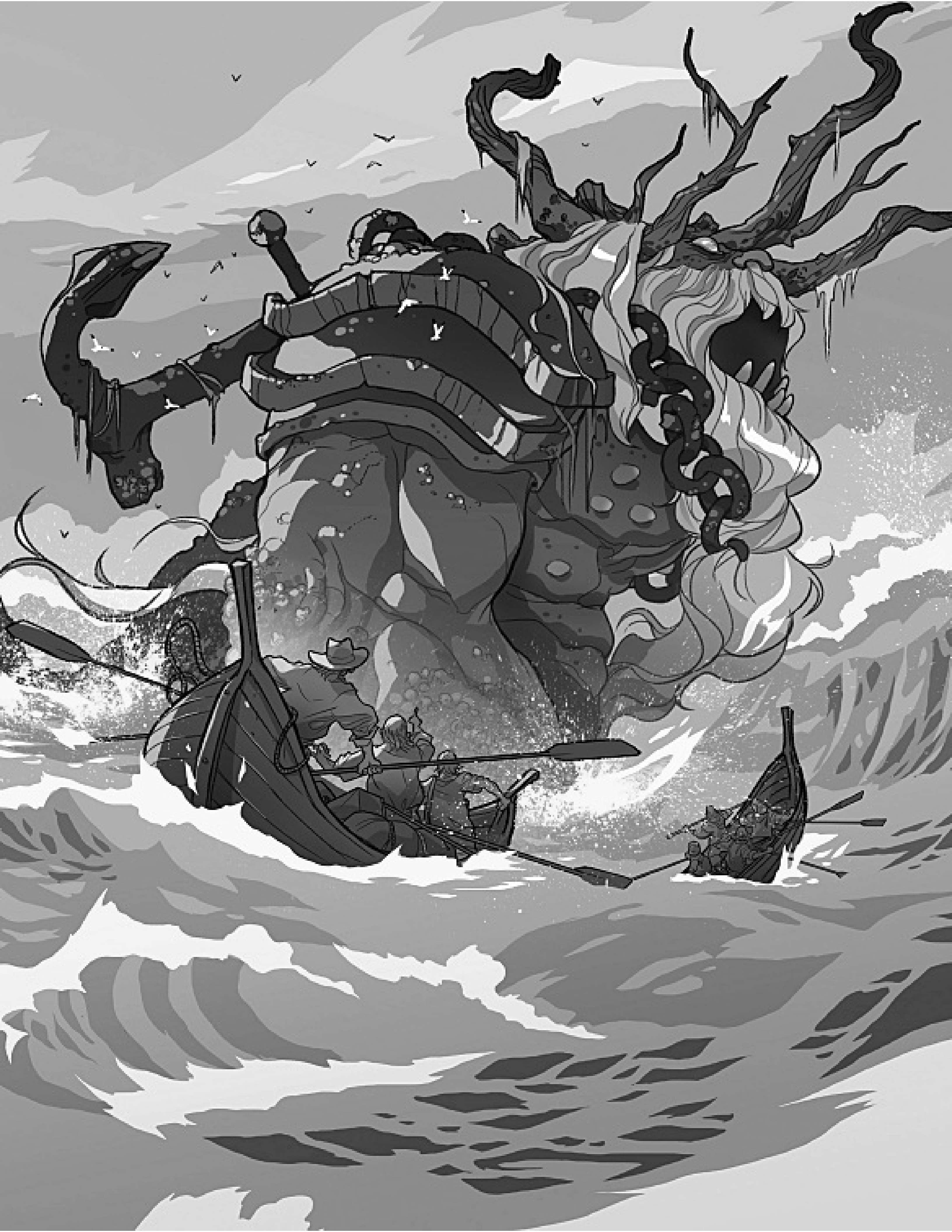
FR: This double-page spread is another flashback, revealing the Giant King's heartbreaking memories. I managed to build a subtle atmosphere and go deep into the Giant's emotions. I struggled with the layout at first and adjusted the characters' poses several times before finalizing this version.

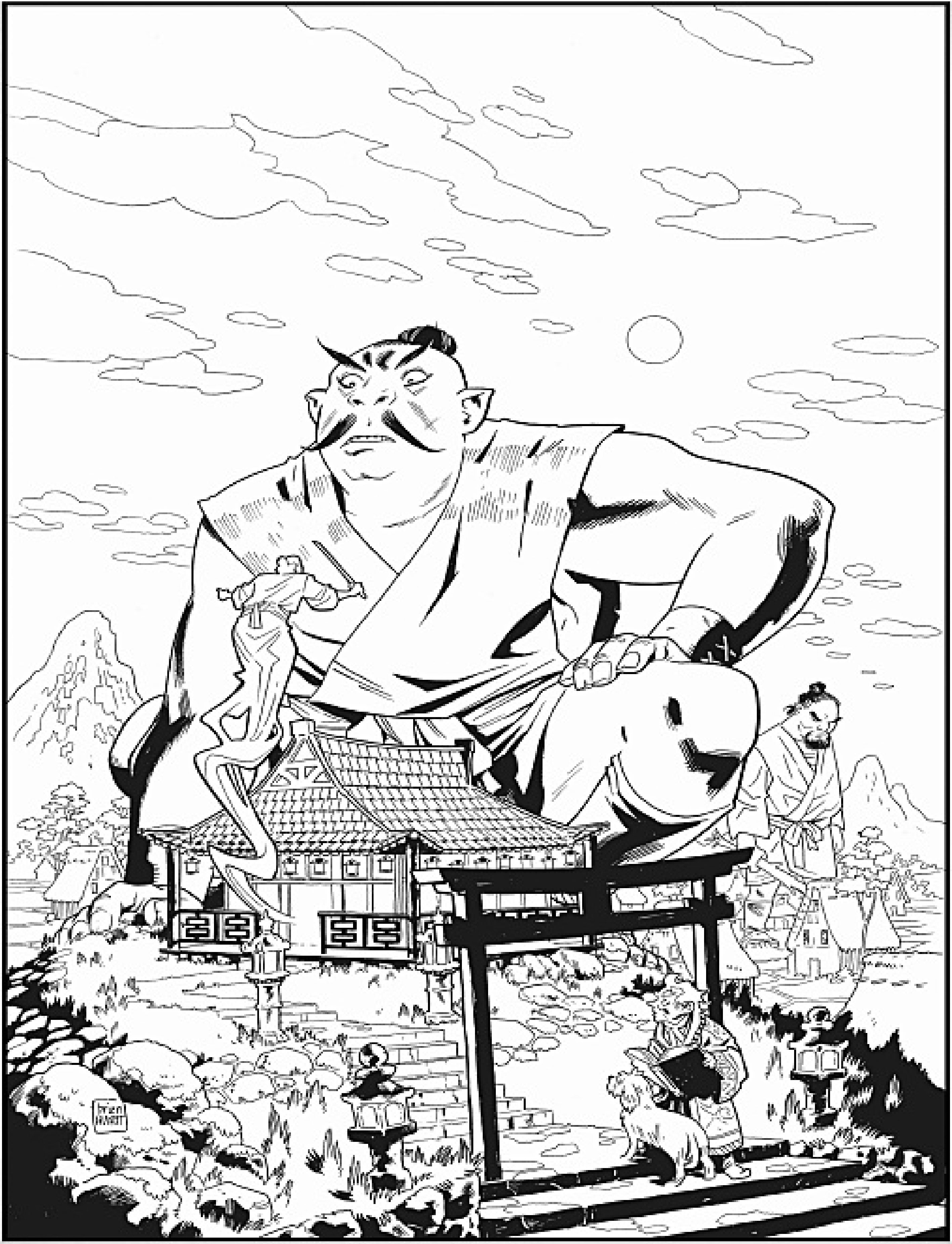


TALE ONE VARIANT COVER

KARL KERSCHL

INKS *(ABOVE)* AND FINAL ART *(RIGHT)*

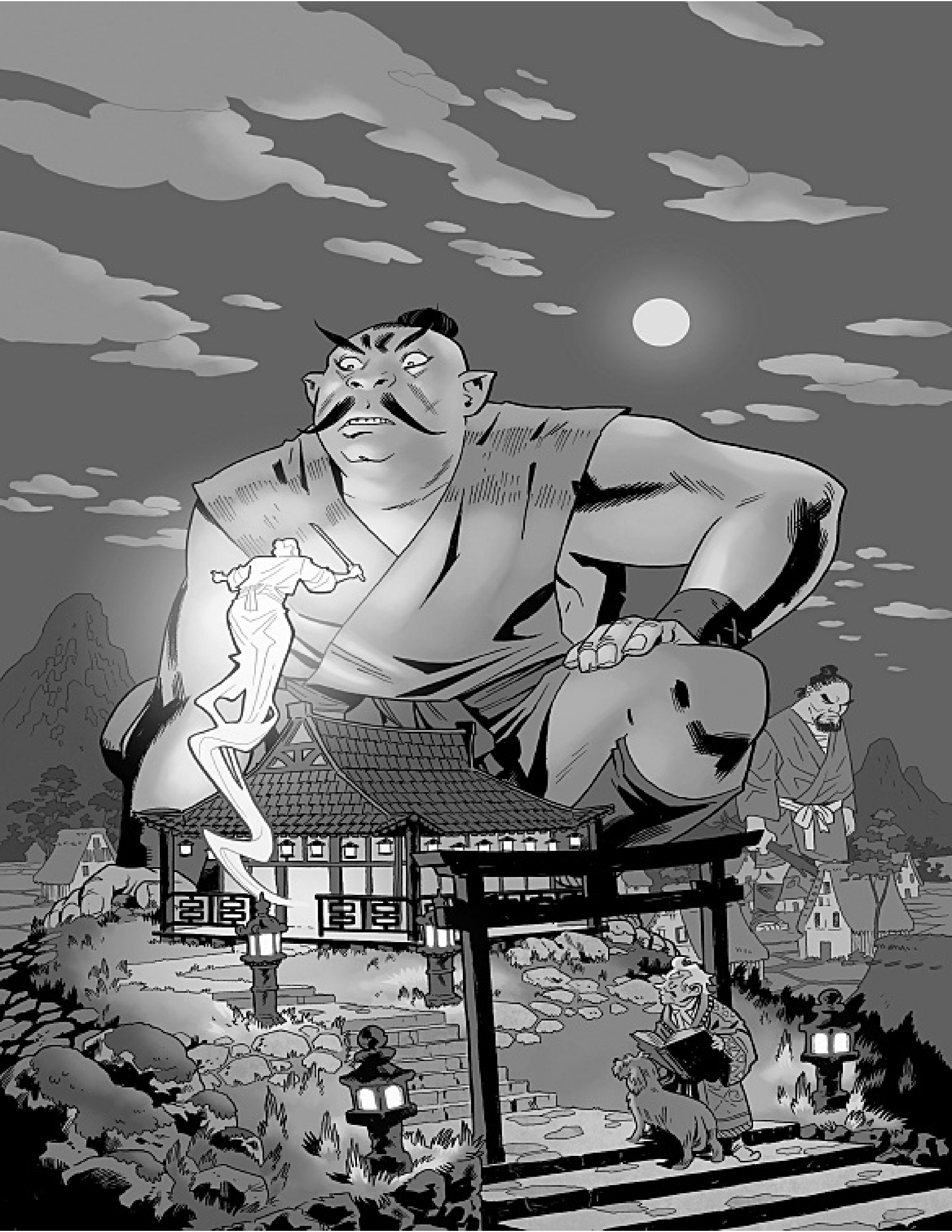


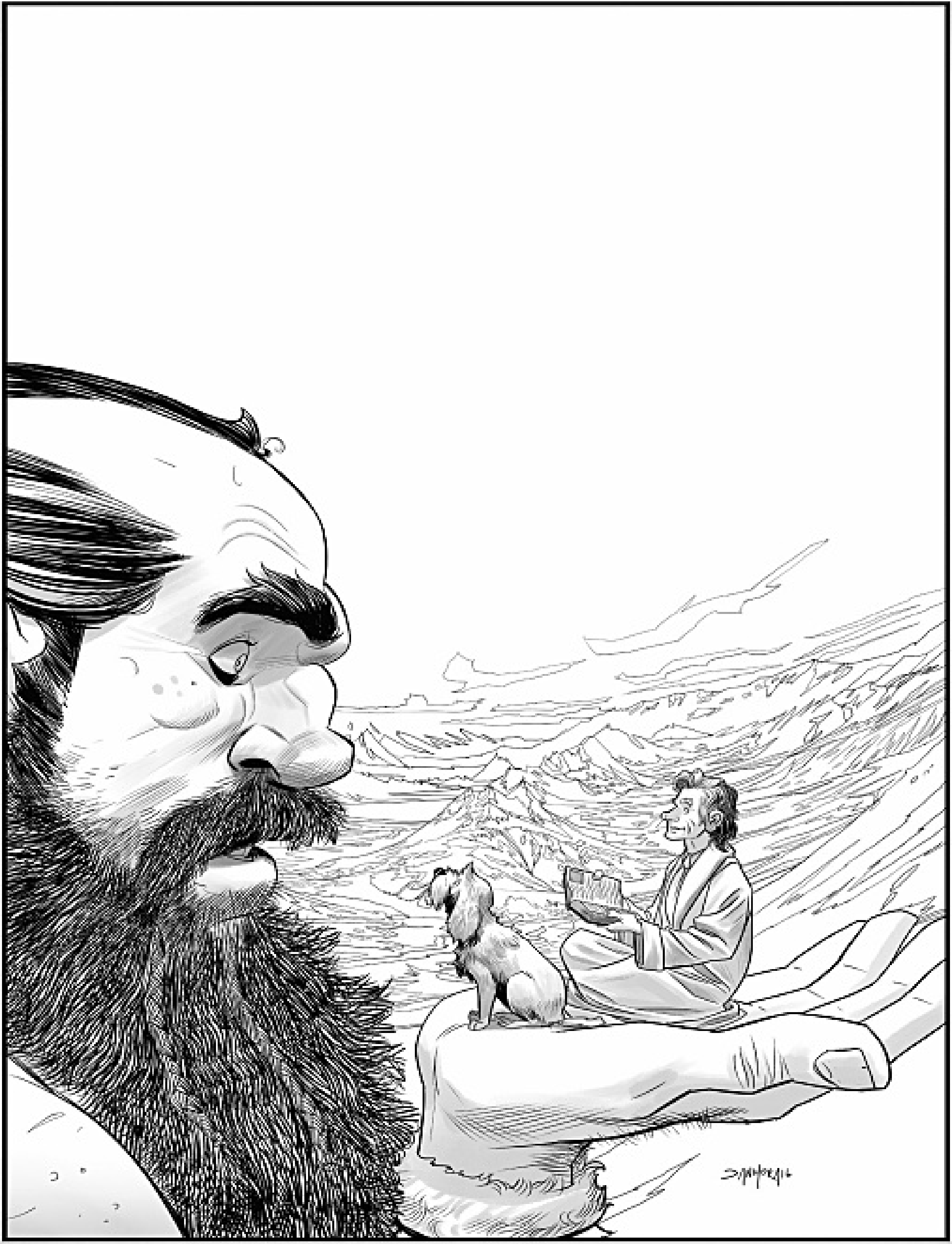


TALE ONE ARCADIAN COMICS & GAMES EXCLUSIVE COVER

BRIAN HURTT WITH COLORS BY **BILL CRABTREE**

INKS *(ABOVE)* AND FINAL ART *(RIGHT)*

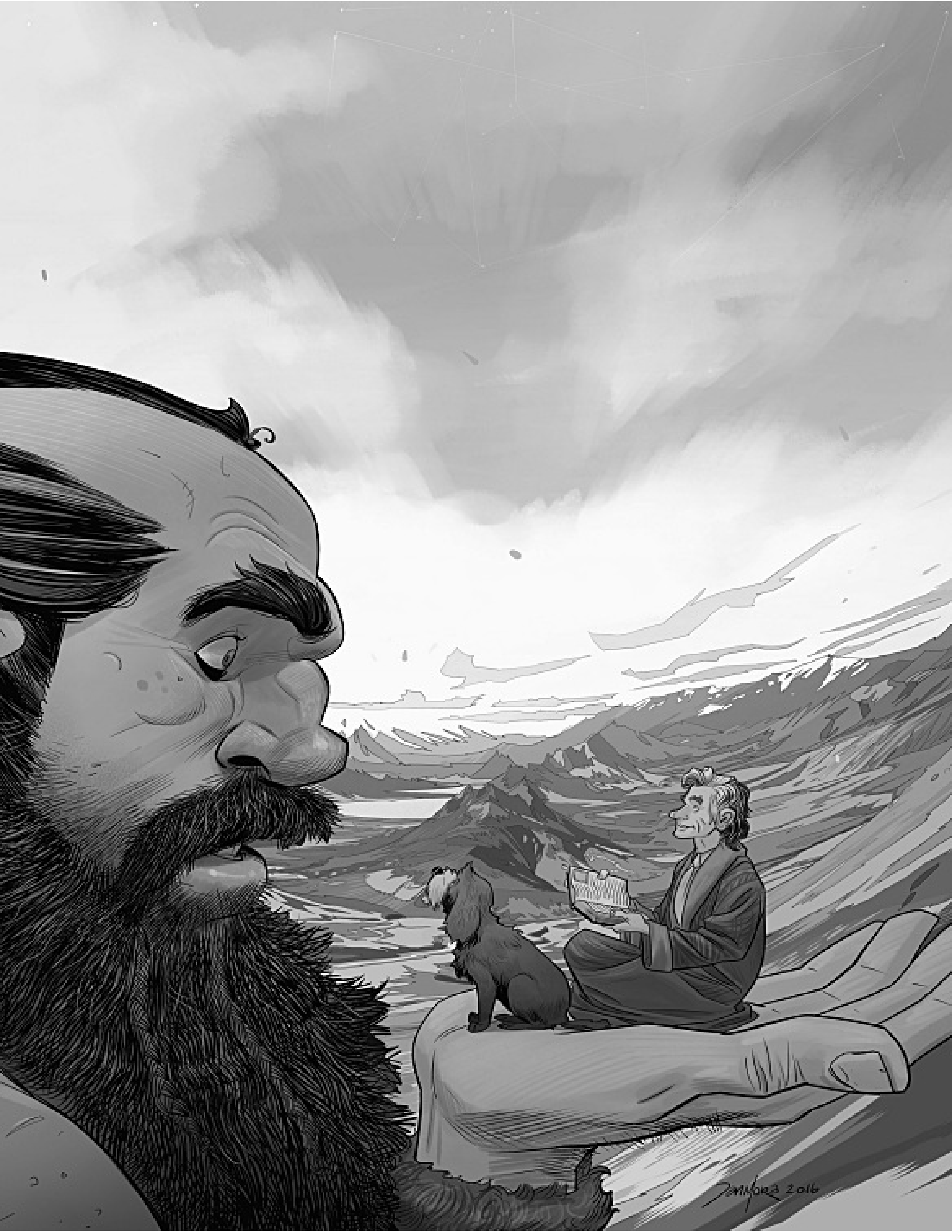


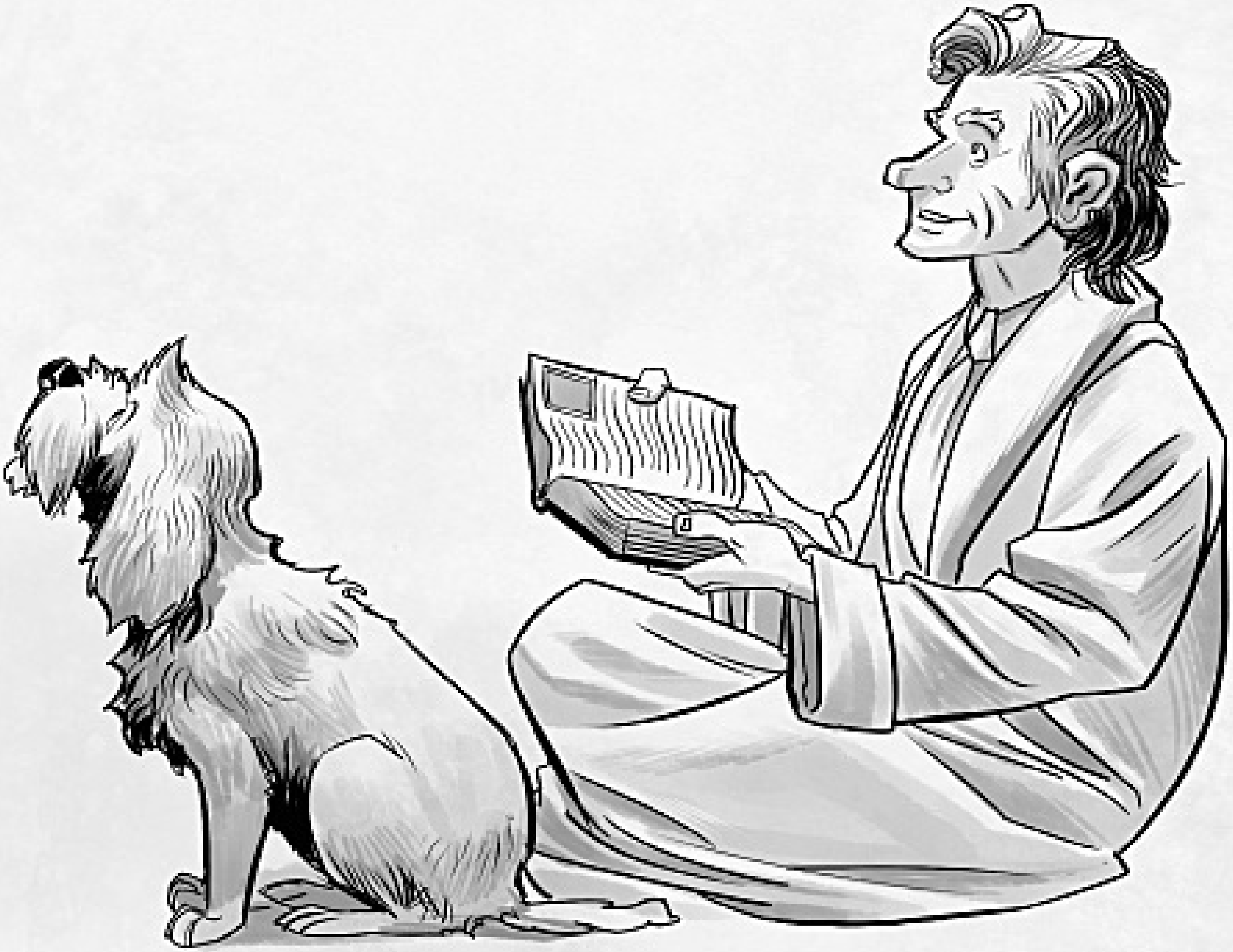


TALE ONE UNLOCKED RETAILER VARIANT COVER

DAN MORA

INKS *(ABOVE)* AND FINAL ART *(RIGHT)*





the STORYTELLERS

Conor Nolan graduated from Pratt Institute in 2012 and gradually found his footing in the world of illustration. Since then he has worked with a variety of clients and has had work appear on posters, shirts, beer labeling, record covers, magazines, newspapers, and a battery of other platforms. Having been raised on a healthy diet of comics and Jim Henson, the combination was a lifelong dream realized in *The Storyteller: Giants*. Conor lives in Massachusetts with his dog, where they break up time at the drawing desk with nature walks and well deserved coffee breaks.

Jared Cullum is a father, gentleman-cartoonist and painter of things with a passion for connecting with people through compelling visual storytelling. Based in Richmond, Virginia, he teaches figure anatomy and plein air painting at the Visual Arts Center.

Brandon Dayton is an illustrator, storyteller, and veteran of the video game industry. He's worked as a concept artist for studios such as EA Games and Disney Interactive as part of the Disney Infinity team. His debut comic, *Green Monk*, was selected as one of the 2011 YALSA Top 10 Great Graphic Novels for Teens. He lives in Salt Lake City, Utah with his wife Annie, and two super powered kids, Lucy and Grey. There may also be some cats and chickens there too. You can see his latest comic work at thegreenmonk.com.

Feifei Ruan is a Chinese illustrator and comic artist based in New York City. She studied visual storytelling and received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts. She was the *Grand Prix* winner of the *Hiii Illustration International Competition 2015*. Her work has also been recognized by *Society of Illustrators*, *3x3 Picture Book Show,* and *The Library of Congress*. Her clients include *Elle Men Magazine, Nautilus Magazine, Wissen Magazine*, BOOM! Studios, The Jim Henson Company, and Cartoon Network. She is also a member of the Society of Illustrators and Art Directors Club.

IT'S NOT THE STORIES YOU TELL,
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The critically acclaimed *Jim Henson's The Storyteller: Giants* celebrates four mythic tales of when giants roamed the Earth, inspired by folklore from around the world and told in the spirit of Jim Henson's beloved television series.

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"Archaia goes big with *Jim Henson's The Storyteller: Giants.*"
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"*[Jim Henson's The Storyteller: Giants]* is an enjoyable read, nicely adapting both the classic show and folk tale."
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